UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE ACTIVE INTELLECT OF AVERROES

PAUL SIDNEY CHRIST

A THESIS

IN PHILOSOPHY

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN

PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PHILADELPHIA

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PREFACE

The influence which Averroes and his followers exerted upon the Scholastic philosophy of the thirteenth century should in itself be a sufficient justification for a complete presentation of the commentator's psychology. It is undoubtedly due to the rather general lack of interest in mediaeval speculation, and especially that of the Arabs, that such a treatise has not been hitherto presented.

The works of Renan and Munk, which are still the most satisfactory presentations which we possess, are nevertheless very general in their treatment and fail to take up the subject in any detailed manner. Munk's account is taken from the unedited Arabic middle commentary which is still extant, and agrees essentially, as far as it goes, with the evidence which I have collected. Renan's account (*Averroes*, pp. 133–158) is somewhat more detailed than that of Munk, but fails to explain the various contradictory statements concerning the hylic intellect. His treatment is careless to the point of inaccuracy. His statement that the active intellect does not differ from the knowledge which we have of the universe is an apparent confusion of the active intellect with the speculative intellect. Renan while usually following the account of the large commentary has here chosen to follow a statement in the fragment of a letter on conjunction (Cf. *Averroes*, p. 137, 465) which he apparently attributes to Averroes, but which internal evidence seems to indicate as more probably to be attributed to his son.

Averroes' theory of conjunction seems to be an independent development. While the commentator finds some justification for the attempted solution of the problem in Aristotle's *De Anima*, the long history of the problem indicates that it possesses a different origin. It is for this reason that I have devoted a separate chapter to the Averroistic theory of Conjunction. I have limited my discussion and exposition on the intellects, as given in Chapter I, primarily to the evidence which I have collected from the large commentary. This I have done because of a statement which Munk (Mélanges, p. 443) alleges Averroes to have made in his paraphrase on the *De Anima* to the effect

that his true opinion concerning the intellects is to be found in his commentaries on the *De Anima*. My exposition of the theory of conjunction has been gathered from the large commentary on the *De Anima*, the *De Beatitudine*, and the *Epistola de Connexione* as given in the Venice edition of 1574. Of his other works, I have made use of the Hercz translation of three treatises on conjunction (*Drei Abhandlungen*—Berlin 1869), and of Hannes' partial translation of Averroes' treatise on conjunction (*Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*—Halle, 1892). I have attempted to make my references to the commentary on the *De Anima*, and the *De Animae Beatitudine* as clear as possible by mentioning the comment number as well as the page in the former, and by giving the chapter as well as the page in the latter. This should facilitate any reference to these works in any edition other than that of which I have made use. Unfortunately, there seems to be no satisfactory system for referring immediately to the various parts of the larger digressions in comments 5 and 36.

I must also express my indebtedness to Dr. Newbold for making me more familiar with his unpublished notes on the active intellect, and to Dr. Husik for his kind assistance in a comparison of the Hebrew texts with the Latin translation of the *De Animae Beatitudine* and the *Epistola de Connexione*. I have in this way been able to secure a more satisfactory interpretation of the commentator's theories.

PAUL SIDNEY CHRIST.

Philadelphia,
April 1, 1926.

I

The Four Intellects and Their Functions

To the two intellects of which Aristotle speaks in his treatise on the soul, Averroes adds two others, the *virtus imaginativa*, and the *intellectus speculativus*. Despite the commentator's earnest efforts to explain the doctrines of Aristotle, he introduces a number of views which are strikingly divergent from those of his master, particularly so with reference to the doctrine of the intellects. These points of agreement and divergence we shall discuss in the course of our exposition.

In accordance with the mode of Aristotle, Averroes begins his investigation concerning the rational faculty[1] with a statement of the problems whose solution is essential for a definition of the field involved and the understanding of its nature. Our investigation, then, he indicates, must involve the determination of the manner in which the rational faculty differs from the other apprehensive faculties with respect to their first and second actuality, and with reference to their proper action and passion, since the various faculties vary in these two ways.[2] Since man differs from the other animals by virtue of the intellect, it is evident *per se* that it is different from the other faculties of the soul.[3] Whether it differs spatially, or logically only, needs further investigation. The investigation concerning the action or passion of the intellect considers the genus of its action, which is thinking.[4] Our inquiry concerning this point will consider whether thought is one of the active or passive faculties.[5] If it be passive, we must inquire whether it is passive because it is hylic in some manner and mixed with the body, as in the case of sense, or whether it is not mixed with matter at

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[1] The Ancients regarded the third book of the *De Anima* as beginning with what we now regard as the fourth chapter of that book.

[2] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 1, p. 136.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] The Latin translation uses the very descriptive and suggestive phrase *formare per intellectum.*

[5] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 2, p. 136.

all, nor is hylic, but has the capacity for receiving forms only in a sense analogous to passion.

Averroes argues that if the intellect is a passive faculty, like sense, and receives or apprehends the intelligibles in the manner in which sense receives the sensibles, one of two things is necessary: either that there occur in the intellect some transmutation or qualitative change, as we find in the case of sense since the actuality of sense is a faculty in the body, or that there be no qualitative change because the first actuality of the intellect is not a faculty in the body, and does not belong to it at all.[6] Consistency with the text of Aristotle[7] requires the commentator to assert that the affection or passivity of intellect is unlike the passivity of sense in that the former suffers no qualitative change since it is not a corporeal faculty. The only sense in which intellect may be assumed to be passive is the sense in which it is receptive of the intelligible forms which it apprehends and in the sense in which it is potentially that which is apprehended through it.[8] In this way then one may express the similarity of the intellect and sense through the proportion that sense is to sensible, as intellect is to intelligible.

The impassivity of intellect may also, according to Averroes, be described in a somewhat different way.[9] Impassivity in the case of intellect is pure, insofar as it is a privation of transmutation or qualitative change. The cause of transmutable reception is matter. It is for this reason that the senses when stimulated by an intense stimulus become fatigued or impaired, while the intellect because of its abstraction is found to be strengthened rather than impaired upon the reception of stimuli of such a character. The term "passion" connot, then, be applied in its strictest sense to the hylic intellect. To use an illustration of Averroes', the hylic intellect may be compared with a *tabula rasa*.[10] Such a tablet, while capable of receiving the picture or characters which may be painted upon it, is nevertheless un-

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[6] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 2, p. 136.
[7] *De Anima*, 429 a, 13–15.
[8] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 3, p. 137B.
[9] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 7, p. 154F.
[10] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 14, p. 158C.

affected by the characters which it receives and by which it is actualized. It is in this sense, then, that the hylic intellect may be considered as belonging to the genus of passive faculties prior to its actualization through the medium of the intelligibles.

To regard the hylic intellect as mixed with matter would require that it also experience a transmutation similar to that of sense. If however, it is to perform its proper function, which is the apprehension of all the existents *extra animam*,[11] it is necessary that it be, again, regarded as separate or abstract, since the presence of matter would cause it to become a purely hylic individual capacity, and require the presence in it of some definite form potentially which would make impossible its apprehension of other forms.[12] To regard the hylic intellect as a *virtus in corpore* would make is possible for it to receive only some definite or single quality such as hot or cold. Not only does the hylic intellect apprehend all the forms of existents, but these forms insofar as they represent the essence of the things *extra animam*, or the universals.[13] The apprehension of the individuals is the function of the particular senses.

Now it is necessary, according to the argument of Averroes that passive faculties be moved by that to which they are attributed, while active faculties move that to which they are attributed.[14] Furthermore, since a thing does not move except *qua* actual, and is moved *qua* potential, it is necessary that insofar as the forms of things are actually *extra animam* they move the rational soul according as it apprehends them, just as in the case of sense the sensibles, insofar as they are existents actually, move the sense. Intellect, we stated, perceives universals only, while sense receives individuals only. The intellect then is unable to perceive the sensibles directly. This requires an intermediate process which Averroes supplies by explaining that the sensibles are carried to the imaginative faculty and

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[11] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 3, p. 137B.
[12] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 6, p. 153E; Munk—*Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe*, p. 445. Munk takes his theory from an unedited middle commentary.
[13] *De Anima*, Bk. 2, com. 63, p. 82; com. 65, p. 83; Bk. 3, com. 6, 20, 33.
[14] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 4, p. 137D–138C.

from that faculty are converted into the intelligibles through a process of further stripping the sensations of their matter through the action of the active intellect. Consequently Averroes argues the necessity of the thinking of the forms which are found in the imaginative faculty on the part of the rational or hylic intellect.

The justification for the postulation of the active intellect is to be found in the fact that there must also be an active function in the intellect insofar as it is the intellect, using the term in a general sense, which extracts the universals from their primal matter in such a way as to make the *sensibilia* intelligibles actually "after they were intelligibles potentially." Since the potential is actualized through some agent which is actual, and the hylic intellect is a potential intellect, it is therefore necessary that we postulate the existence of the active intellect. Both active and hylic intellect are interpreted by Averroes to be neither generable nor corruptible. Of this problem we shall, however, treat later.

We have already remarked that the hylic intellect can be neither matter nor a faculty in matter, *i.e.* in the body, for were its nature such it could receive only individual forms. In fact we must assume it as a necessary principle, according to Averroes, that everything which receives anything be free from the nature of that which is received, and that its substance be not in the species of the received.[15] If that which receives were of the nature of the received, the thing would receive itself, and the mover would be the moved. Intellect as well as sense then must be bare of form. The hylic intellect is to be regarded as a substance, which is different from form, matter, or the composite. It is to be regarded as a fourth genus of being.[16] It is an existent, separable or abstract, simple and unmixed, and potential. There is left to its nature, then, nothing except that of the capacity for receiving the hylic intelligible forms,[17] and it is potentially all the forms or concepts of the hylic universal

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[15] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 4, p. 138.
[16] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 5, p. 151D.
[17] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 25, p. 168F–169A; Bk. 3, com. 5, p. 138F.

forms, although it is actually none of them until it thinks them.[18]

To him who would insist that, since the hylic intellect is of such a nature, it must be prime matter, Averroes would reply[19] that the hylic intellect is potentially all the concepts of the hylic universal forms while prime matter is potentially all the individual sensible forms. Furthermore, that which receives particular forms cannot be regarded as being possessed of any capacity of apprehension whatever. Prime matter then differs again from the hylic intellect in this respect also. The reception of universal forms raises the hylic intellect above that which is purely corporeal and individual in nature, for were its nature such the forms which would be received by it could be nothing other than individual forms. Now individual forms are only intelligibles potentially, and consequently the knowing process could not be completed, for true knowledge involves universality, and an apprehension of the quiddities of things or of form *qua* form. The discussion of the other problems concerning the hylic intellect must be treated in another connection.

Aristotle, we said, speaks of two intellects only, the active intellect and the passive intellect.[20] The latter of these is potentially all the objects of thought, or forms. The active intellect he speaks of as "making" all things. It is the efficient cause, or to put it in another way, the cause of actual thinking. It is this latter intellect which is according to what is probably his true opinion, "separable", "impassive", and "unmixed". One may then infer that the intellect which Aristotle speaks of as the "passive" intellect is not, according to his view, immortal, nor is it possessed of the attributes of separability, impassivity, and freedom from mixture.

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[18] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 5, p. 139A.—Averroes here seems to combine and identify the Aristotelian conception of mind as speculative and as practical into the single conception of the hylic intellect. ". . . intende per intellectum hic virtutem animae, quae dicitur intellectus vere: non virtutem, quae dicitur intellectus large, scilicet, virtutem imaginativam in lingua Graeca: sed virtutem qua distinguimus res speculativas et cogitamus in rebus operationis futuris." For Averroes, *res speculativas* means the actualized intelligibles. These are either the intelligibles of sensible objects, or the "first propositions" whose origin is unknown.

[19] *De Anima*, Bk. 3, com. 5, p. 139A.

[20] *De Anima*, 430 a, 10–17.

Strange as it may seem, the passive intellect of which Aristotle speaks is not the passive intellect of which Averroes speaks. Faithful as he tried to be in the exposition of the text of the man whom he regarded the greatest of mortals, Averroes nevertheless fails[21] here in his interpretation of Aristotle's theory.[22] The Aristotelian passive intellect for Averroes becomes endowed with the same attributes as the active intellect with the sole difference that the former is acted upon while the latter acts. The "passive" intellect in the sense in which Aristotle uses the term is, according to Averroes, the *virtus imaginativa*![23]

Averroes' conception of imagination as a process is in its general aspects close enough to that of Aristotle. Imagination is a motion generated by actual perception.[24] Its dependence upon the faculty of sense is consequently established. While the sense-perception is true for the greater part, the possibility of truth and falsity, especially the latter, is considerably greater in the case of imagination than in the case of sense. Sense is true as long as the objects sensed are nothing but its proper sensibles. Since imagination is regarded as dependent upon and moved by sense actually, our images are true when the sense itself is true, and false when sense is false. However, imagina-

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[21] Averroes' failure must probably be attributed to more than one cause. He himself admits in at least one place (beginning of comment 36, Bk. III) that his texts varied. His texts were the result of a number of translations through different languages. One may readily imagine the difficulties against which he was compelled to struggle in his efforts to interpret the text accurately. On the other hand he seems to have been influenced in no slight degree by the interpretations which were made by Themistius, and Alexander especially. Averroes' own desire to be logical and accurate in his reasoning,—and one everywhere sees traces of it—must have contributed to his failure as well. It was probably his logic, and probably combined with it, an uncertain text which must have compelled him to interpret one of the most important passages in the whole of the *De Anima* (430 a, 10–17) as speaking of *three* intellects instead of two, as Aristotle actually does. (cf. Averroes' *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 18). On the other hand Aristotle is himself rather vague in his earlier remarks concerning intellect, for in them (cf. *De Anima*, 408b, 18-29; 413b, 24–27) he speaks in a general way concerning intellect without any reference to his later view of the active and passive element. Equally indefinite and in many ways contradictory to Aristotle's remarks in the passage 430 a, 10–18, is the passage 429a, 10–429b, 9.

[22] Aristotle cannot, perhaps, be said to have had a theory of the intellect in the strictest sense of the word since he has not attempted to explain his views in any detail.

[23] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 20, p. 164C; Bk. III, com. 5, p. 151B.

[24] *De Anima*, Bk. II, com. 161, p. 134F–135C.

tion is possible even in the absence of the sensible itself, that is, in the absence of the actual perception. At such times the possibility of falsity is the greatest. Now, in the case of thinking the extended, it is the forms which are received through the medium of this faculty of imagination which, when raised to the level of universality, or of actual intelligibles by the mediation of the active intellect, move the hylic intellect so as to think them. As we have just observed, these images may be received directly from an actual perception through the faculty of imagination, or may be recalled[25] from memory through the intervention of another faculty which is allied with these, the *virtus cogitativa.* The latter function may again be divided into what we regard as reproductive imagination, and constructive imagination. To Averroes' mind the distinction seems somewhat hazy. This is very likely due to the fact that he is thinking of forms as presenting themselves singly in sensation or in consciousness without recognizing the complex nature of the psychological processes. Forms may be regarded as units or wholes, and for Averroes there could be little possibility of one form merging with another to form a new and distinct psychological entity. That he was dimly aware of the difficulty we may regard as certain,[26] since he remarks that it is possible to present an image which was never sensed before, and to think of future events in the light of the present, and yet to this he adds the possibility of abstract thinking in the same faculty, the *virtus cogitativa*, in a manner which is hardly compatible with his general theory. In fact, a variant theory concerning this point may be found in the very same passage upon which the immediately preceding exposition is based. Averroes here maintains that in such speculative thinking, the *virtus cogitativa* is able to discover some image in the memory which is appropriate to the ideal situation. This image is then judged by the intellect in a universal judgment.

We stated that Averroes believed the passive intellect to be the *virtus imaginativa.* Even on this point Averroes seems inconsistent in his views, for in at least two comments he asserts

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[25] *De Anima,* Bk. III, com. 33, p. 172F–173C.
[26] *De Anima,* Bk. III, com. 33, p. 172F–173C.

that man is generable and corruptible in respect to both the *virtus imaginativa* and the *virtus cogitativa* combined.[27] What seems to be another difficulty in his theory concerning the hylic individual cognitive faculties may be found in his views on the relation between the *virtus imaginativa*, the *virtus cogitativa*, and the *virtus rememorativa*. All of these faculties are to be regarded as hylic individual faculties. The nature and function of the *virtus imaginativa* has already been explained. The *virtus rememorativa* is nothing other than memory. It is the function of the *virtus cogitativa*[28] to distinguish the form or intelligible element of the sensible object from its image in thinking, or to place the form of the image with its image in memory.[29] Its other function is the recall of such images from memory in the absence of the actual perception itself. The *virtus cogitativa* must consequently be viewed as an active faculty rather than as a passive faculty, although it is at the same time a generable and corruptible faculty.[30] Another peculiarity to be noted is that in order of rank the *virtus imaginativa* is lowest because it possesses the least "spirituality". Above it stand respectively the *virtus cogitativa*, and the *virtus rememorativa*. One who approaches Averroes from a critical point of view is led to inquire how it is possible that the *virtus imaginativa* receive the forms which have been laid away in memory, through the activity of the *virtus cogitativa*. Averroes asserts[31] that the *virtus imaginativa* receives the form conjoined with its proper and common sensibles. Now the *virtus cogitativa* receives the same form but strips it of these common and proper sensibles, and places it

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[27] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 33, p. 173C; Bk. III, com. 20, p. 164C.

[28] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 6, p. 154B; Bk. III, com. 20, p. 164C; Bk. II, com. 63, p. 82F.

[29] Averroes' treatment of this point is inadequate, and it is consequently impossible to develop it further without going into the uncertainties of speculation.

[30] Averroes regards the *virtus cogitativa* as a passive faculty since it has a corporeal instrument. In fact the *virtus imaginativa*, the *virtus cogitativa*, and the *virtus rememorativa* are passive, hylic, and individual for this reason, hence also generable and corruptible. Each has a definite seat in the cerebrum. The *virtus imaginativa* has its seat in the anterior part of the cerebrum; the *virtus cogitativa* in the middle, and the *virtus rememorativa* in the posterior part. (Cf. Bk. III, com. 6, p. 154A).

[31] *De Anima*, Bk. II, com. 63, p. 82F.

then in the *virtus rememorativa*, although according to another view which he holds, the *virtus cogitativa* at each exercise of its power upon experience places both this form together with its image in memory. According to the former view, one is led to inquire how it is possible for the *virtus imaginativa* to receive what seems a more spiritual form than it is able to receive. According to the other view, supposing it is the image rather than the form of the image which the *virtus imaginativa* receives, what is the function of the form of the image? Averroes nowhere explains the difficulty. If we assume according to the latter view that it is the image rather than its form, which the *virtus imaginativa* receives during reflection, the forms of images are an element in the knowing process which apparently have no value or function whatever. An inquiry into the relation between the *virtus cogitativa* and the *virtus rememorativa* leads to no lesser difficulties. Averroes speaks of the *virtus rememorativa* as more spiritual than the *virtus cogitativa*. Now that which is more spiritual is to be regarded as superior, and consequently to act upon what is inferior rather than to be acted upon by the inferior itself. One would presume that as a consequence the *virtus cogitativa* should be regarded superior. Yet here again the commentator fails to recognize the weakness of his theory. One might continue with a critical examination of this sort the result of which would only further expose the unsatisfactoriness and the feebleness of Averroes' interpretation.[32]

It is in connection with his critical examination of the theories of some of the earlier Peripatetics and Arabs concerning Aristotle's psychology that Averroes makes some of his most radical depar-

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[32] In view of the fact that Averroes regards the *virtus cogitativa* as more spiritual than the *virtus imaginativa*, and in view of the fact that the "form of the image," while still a hylic individual form, is nevertheless more spiritual or universal than the image itself, one may inquire concerning the relation of this faculty to the hylic intellect itself. According to his views on conjunction there is no possibility of a form uniting with any other form than that which is immediately superior. Yet Averroes clearly makes the form of the image superior to the image itself, although it is the images which are the potential intelligibles and which become the form and content of the hylic intellect upon their actualization by the hylic intellect. This is but another of the many questions which may be raised concerning the views of the commentator, and which cannot be satisfactorily explained on the basis of the information which he has left us.

tures from the theory of his master. Let us accordingly trace the development of his thought in this connection. According to Theophrastus, Themistius, and others[33] the hylic intellect is to be regarded as a substance which is neither generable nor corruptible, for what is of such a nature, namely, generable and corruptible, is singular and individual. In addition to this they recognized the necessity of postulating the existence of the active intellect as a means or agent by which the hylic intellect might be drawn from its state of potentiality into a state of actuality. Through the union of these two intellects there results a third intellect, the *intellectus speculativus*. Since both the hylic and the active intellect are eternal, the third, or *intellectus speculativus*, was regarded as eternal also.[34] The *intellectus speculativus* is, according to their view, composed of the hylic and active intellects, and is an intellect in itself. The forms or intelligibles are created by the active intellect, yet the generation of these intelligibles is regarded as subject to our will, and the increase of the speculative intellect in us. The intermittence of thought is due to the weakening of the degree of "mixture" of the active intellect with the hylic intellect, and consequently of the speculative intellect as well.

According to Averroes such a theory is contrary to that of Aristotle because the active intellect is related to the hylic intellect as the sensible object is related to the sense.[35] This objection seems improper, since the speculative intellect is, according to them, the perfection or actualization of the hylic intellect through the agency of the active intellect, although at the same time the *intellectus speculativus* is regarded as a distinct intellect, as Averroes himself maintains.

A second difficulty, he maintains, is that their position is contrary to truth, in that the eternity of thinking implies also the eternity of the thought, and consequently the existence of the sensibles as intelligibles or universals, instead of their existence

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[33] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 139E.

[34] Averroes argues that the *intellectus speculativus*, and the *inteliectus agens* can be regarded eternal only if we use the terms *agens* and *factum* analogously (*secundum similitudinem*) since *agens* and *factum*, strictly speaking, involve the idea of time. Cf. *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 140C.

[35] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 141A.

as hylic objects, as they are actually believed to be. Now thinking as such is generable and corruptible.[36] Consequently it is necessary that all the elements involved in sense-perception and intellection be generable and corruptible also. Averroes asserts that the arguments against the eternity of thinking apply also against the eternity of the hylic intellect, since it seems inconceivable to him that the intelligibles be generable *de novo*, without the generation *de novo* of the hylic intellect, although his reasons for this relationship are not clear. According to the theory presented above, since both agent and patient are eternal the resultant speculative intellect was regarded as eternal also. If now we are compelled to assume instead that the *intellectus speculativus* is created *de novo*, the question arises for him as to how it can generate and create the intelligibles.

A third difficulty which Averroes atrributes to their theory is, like the preceding difficulty, purely logical. If the hylic intellect be assumed the first actuality of man and the speculative intellect as the second or ultimate actuality of man, and if we assert that man is generable and corruptible, and individual through his complete or ultimate actuality through the intellect, then it is necessary that he be assumed such also through his first actuality. Now it is regarded as a principle that if the first actuality be individual the second or ultimate actuality must also be individual and conversely. It is through the second or ultimate actuality of the intellect that man is individuated and is distinguishable from each and every other individual. Through the first actuality of the intellect man must be regarded as specifically one and unindividuated.[37]

The view of Alexander is regarded as an effort to avoid the difficulties which have befallen the theory of Theophrastus and Themistius. Alexander concludes the hylic intellect is a *virtus generata*, or a capacity which has originated through a mixing

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[36] *De Anima*, Bk. I, com. 66, p. 34C.

[37] More concretely, according to the ultimate actuality through the intellect, I am other than you, and you other than I. If the second actuality failed to individuate, "you would exist through my essence, and I through yours, and universally man would exist before he existed." As unindividuated any knowledge which I might acquire would also be acquired by you and what was known to the teacher would be shared by the pupil.

of the various elements,[38] and which is capable of receiving the active intellect. This capacity is like the capacity which exists on a *tabula rasa*, rather than as the *tabula rasa qua* capable, a view which is rejected as ridiculous by Averroes.

Abubacer and Avempace, in order to avoid the difficulties into which Alexander has fallen, consider the hylic intellect identical with the *virtus imaginativa* insofar as it is possible that the concepts which exist in it may be intelligibles actually. However, Averroes insists, the concepts of the imagination move the intellect, and are related to the hylic intellect as is the sensible to sense. These conceptual forms must not be regarded as moved accordingly,—a statement which must be accepted only with the qualification that the *formae imaginativae* are changed from their potentiality as intelligibles into the actual intelligibles through the medium or agency of the active intellect.[39]

Insisting upon the impossibility of what has been said thus far by these men concerning the nature of the hylic intellect, Averroes turns to Aristotle,[40] and indicates the nature of the problems which present themselves to him. The first of these deals with the mode in which the *intelligibilia speculativa* are generable and corruptible; the second with the mode in which the second or ultimate actuality in man is individual, while the first actuality is one in number for all. The third, a question apparently originating with Theophrastus, inquires in what way the hylic intellect is an existent.[41]

Averroes proceeds to solve the first by stating that the specu-

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[38] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 143B.

[39] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 144D.

[40] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 145C. Averroes speaks as though Aristotle himself were conscious of these problems. We have no reason whatever for believing such to be the case since Aristotle has nowhere made any effort to complete his discussion of the nature of the intellects. The questions which Averroes puts to Aristotle seem rather a development of the questions which he raises against the Peripatetic and Arab philosophers who preceded him in their interpretations of Aristotle.

[41] These questions as formulated (p. 145C–D of the *De Anima*) vary slightly from the questions which he discusses, or the form in which he discusses them. Whether these changes are due to the translator's inaccuracy and faulty texts we cannot say. Experience with Averroes' texts inclines one toward the belief that Averroes himself was rather careless in his composition.

lative intelligibles are constituted through two things, one of which is generated, and the other ungenerated. Now apprehension through the senses is actualized through two subjects; one of these is the subject by virtue of which the sense is true,—the sensible object *extra animam*, the other is the subject by virtue of which sense is the existing form,—the first actuality of the sense itself. In thought, likewise, it is necessary that there be the corresponding two subjects for the actually existing intelligibles. The subject through which the intelligibles are true are the true images of the things themselves; the subject through which the intelligibles are hylic existents is the hylic intellect. Averroes compares the relation existing between the intellect and the intelligibles with the relation existing between sight, light and color. The subject of sight, which is color, moves sight, but only when through the presence of light, the potential color is made color actually. In the case of intellect, the *formae imaginativae*, or concepts in imagination, move the hylic intellect only after they are changed from potential intelligibles to actual intelligibles through the agency of the active intellect. Just as it is sight which is actualized by color actually, so it is the hylic intellect which is actualized by the intelligibles actually. Averroes concludes then that the speculative intelligibles, which are the actual intelligibles, are generable and corruptible only through the subject through which they are true,—the *formae imaginativae*, and not through the hylic intellect by virtue of which they are one of the existents.

In its fullest form the second question which Averroes has proposed may be stated as follows: "In what way is the hylic intellect numerically one in all human individuals, and neither generable nor corruptible, while the intelligibles existing in it actually (which are the *intellectus speculativas*), are generable and corruptible through the generation and corruption of the individuals?"[42]

Averroes finds himself on the horns of a dilemma. If we assert, on the one hand, that the hylic intellect is individual, it follows that it is some singular individual, or *corpus*, or *virtus in*

[42] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 146F–147A.

corpore. If it were an individual, it would consequently be a potential intelligible. Now a potentially intelligible concept is the subject which moves the hylic intellect. If then the receiving subject, the hylic intellect, were asserted to be an individual, it would receive itself, which is impossible. If it were admitted possible that it receive itself, it would receive itself *qua* divided or divisible, and thus intellect would be identical with sense,[43] or there would be no difference between the essence of form *extra animam* and *in anima*, since individual matter receives only individual forms.

If on the other hand, we assert that the hylic intellect is not individual, it follows that it is not individual in its second or ultimate actuality either. Consequently any intelligible which is acquired by one individual is acquired by all. To put the matter in a less technical form, what one individual might desire to remain secret would be shared by all, and consequently would be no secret at all.

Now it is clear, Averroes says by way of solution,[44] that man does not think except on account of the continuation of the hylic intellect with him actually. In the next place, matter and form, in the case of the intellect and its actually intelligible concept, are so coupled with each other that their product or composite is one, and not a *tertium quid* as in other composites. Consequently it is impossible that there be a continuation of the hylic intellect with man except through either the part which serves as matter or the part which answers to form. Since the hylic intellect cannot be coupled with each individual, or numbered with the numeration of the individual, through the part which answers to matter, which is the hylic intellect itself, it follows that the intellect is coupled with us through the part

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[43] Averroes is here referring to the doctrine expressed in the *De Anima*, 425 b, 12–17. The perception that we see or hear must, according to Aristotle, be either through the sense of sight or hearing, or through some other sense. If we assert that it is the same sense which perceives sight and which perceives the object of sight, or color, it will follow that sight perceives itself. If we regard the sense which perceives that we see as a distinct sense, the series will go on to infinity or some one of the senses will perceive itself. An infinite series is an impossibility for Aristotle, consequently we must admit this of the first of the series.

[44] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 148C.

which answers to form, or the intelligibles. Consequently to call a boy potentially intelligent may be understood to mean that the *formae imaginativae* are potentially intelligibles or that the hylic intellect which is capable of receiving the intelligibles of the *formae imaginativae* is potentially receptive, and continued with us potentially. The imaginative faculty is like the other parts of the soul insofar as it is generable and corruptible, but they differ in the respect that the former, through the *formae imaginativae*,[45] possesses the capacity to move, while there exists in it and the other parts of the soul also the capacity to receive.

Continuing with the constant assumption of the eternity of the hylic and active intellects, Averroes asserts his belief in the unity of the hylic intellect for all men, and the eternity of the human species. In addition, it is likewise necessary then that the hylic intellect be not denuded of the natural principles,[46] and the individual concepts which are common to the entire human species. Collectively they constitute the *intellectus speculativus* which, regarded *qua recipiens*, is, like the hylic intellect, one for the entire race; but regarded *qua receptum*, or *qua* the concept received, it is plural. According to the former mode, the *intellectus speculativus*, or the speculative intelligibles which compose it, is eternal; according to the mode in which it is plural, it is subject to generation and corruption. If, then, any of these "first propositions," or intelligibles, be corrupted on account of its subject by which it is joined and coupled with us and is true—which is some appropriate form of the imaginative faculty—it is necessary that that intelligible be not absolutely incorruptible, but corruptible relatively to each individual. In

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[45] Averroes is apparently somewhat inaccurate in his statement here. The *formae imaginativae* according to the numerous explanations elsewere do not move the hylic intellect until they have been made intelligibles actually through the agency of the active intellect. The actual intelligibles are universals; the *formae imaginativae* are individual forms as I have explained elsewhere. Consequently there seems no reason why Averroes should here assign any active capacity whatever to the *formae imaginativae*. To do so merely exposes him to another of his numerous contradictions in statement.

[46] The common principles, and concepts to which Averroes here alludes are apparently (according to Bk. III, com. 5, p. 150D and E) nothing else than what in its broadest sense might be called the culture or civilization of the human race. He is apparently including all the arts and sciences.

this way, then, Averroes declares the speculative intellect to be one for all individuals. Considered *qua* absolute existents, and not relatively to any individual they are eternal; considered relatively to the individual they are generable and corruptible. As if to strike a balance, Averroes adds, they seem to have a certain existence between the eternal and non-existence![47] As a proof of the eternity of these intellects Averroes cites the case of the arts and sciences. The arts and sciences are proper to man, and are to be found actually in the greater part of mankind at all times. In this mode neither the hylic, speculative, nor active intellect can be regarded as generable or corruptible.

To one who pauses long enough to visualize these various elements involved in the thinking process, and to view it as it must have been viewed by Averroes, the curious mixture of logic and experience is naïve indeed. Each and every individual in the human race must be regarded as constantly influenced by these abstract intellects, and at every moment of their waking life. One may suppose that Averroes would explain a dream in the same way. From sensation to image, from image to actual intelligible is the course which every stimulus in the waking life must take. In addition there is the influence of the active intellect stripping the images of their individual elements and abstracting from them their universal form. The intelligibles *qua* actual move the hylic intellect so as to be received, which is nothing other than to be thought. In the reflective life, or in dreams, where the direct sense perception is lacking, it is the forms which were stored away in memory that initiate the series. The elements and process in their abstraction seem simple enough, but when regarded from the standpoint of actual conscious activity it seems almost incredibly rapid and complex. In its more general aspect and applied to all existing human beings and extending throughout eternity there is a certain charm in its very naïveté.

Considered more critically, has Averroes proved his thesis? That Averroes perceived the difficulty is certain. Since sense is a faculty in the body and perceives only hylic individuals, and

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[47] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 150C.

since every capacity which is mixed with matter perceives only what is individual, he felt himself compelled by his logic to assert that the hylic intellect which perceives universals only must be abstract and unmixed. It is at this point however, that his troubles begin. If the hylic intellect is abstract or separable, is it only logically separable or is it spatially separable also? That it is logically separable is certain, since it is by virtue of the capacity to reason that man differs from the other animals. If it be spatially separable as well, it must be, like the intelligences of the spheres, a species in itself, and possess eternal existence. On the other hand it is also necessary that it have a closer relation to each and every individual of the human race. An appeal to common experience must have convinced him that each man's experience is his own. Universality or individuality, were the horns of the dilemma which pressed him. To the former his logic drove him; the latter common sense required. His reply is an attempt to reconcile both: his failure at reconciliation proved his undoing. The universality and separability to which his logic led him was the universality and separability of the abstract intelligences, or what he calls in another work total separability.[48] Partial separability he likewise recognizes as possible, but for such his logic seems inadequate. One may find abundant evidence to show Averroes was hesitating between these possibilities but logic, for him, led only to the former.

The abstract is also immaterial, and eternal; the individual is hylic and subject to generation and corruption. These, too, were problems with which Averroes found it necessary to grapple. The relation between immateriality and materiality, Averroes attempted to solve through the assertion that it is through the *formae imaginatae* that man is coupled with the hylic intellect. But this, as we have stated before, is a statement which seems contradictory to Averroes' assertions elsewhere. The *formae imaginatae* are merely potential intelligibles and cannot move the hylic intellect actually until they are made intelligibles actually through the intervention of the active intellect. As potential intelligibles the *formae imaginatae* are hylic and

[48] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. 2, p. 150A–B.

individual; when acted upon by the active intellect they are universals and of a different order. Although Averroes makes an attempt to deal with the problem of the relation of mind and body it seems unlikely, from the mode of his procedure, that its true nature could have been completely and clearly recognized by him. If we are to assume the hylic intellect to be abstract, as Averroes would have us believe, and if it be through the intelligibles that we are coupled with the hylic intellect, as Averroes likewise asserts,—but the hylic intellect is abstract or separable, how could it be the individual who really thinks? Could the individual really be conscious of the content of a mind which is not his own? Averroes' difficulties are due essentially to his failure to distinguish between the total and partial separability.

The third source of difficulty is that of the relation of the eternal to the generable and corruptible. It is a problem which ranks, for Averroes, with that of the relation of the universal to the individual, and becomes of supreme importance in his theory of conjunction. Here again Averroes finds difficulty in making an adequate reconciliation of the two. The hylic intellect *qua* abstract is also eternal. It is through the hylic intellect that man is a rational being, although he is at the same time generable and corruptible. The human race or species is eternal, but the individual members of the species are subject to birth and death. Insofar as both the hylic intellect and the species are eternal Averroes finds no difficulty. It is in the relation of eternity to individuality actually that the difficulty arises. The solution which Averroes offers is a confusion of logic and experience. The eternity of the hylic intellect to which Averroes' logic leads is a true eternity without any composition of parts whatever. The same may be asserted of the species in the mode in which eternity is predicated of it. The fallacy is to be found in the mode in which Averroes attempts to discover eternity as well in the parts of which the whole is composed. The hylic intellect *qua* individual cannot be regarded as other than plural, a fact to which Averroes agrees and to which his experience assented. By no trick of reason can a stubborn logic assist him to unite them again into a unit to

which the attribute of eternity may be assigned. It is the fallacy of composition.[49]

The third question which Averroes raised inquires in what way the hylic intellect is an existent, yet is not a hylic form nor prime matter.[50] Averroes' proofs that the hylic intellect is neither prime matter nor a hylic form we have already given. Neither can it be a composite. It is therefore necessary that we believe it to be a fourth genus of being. Now as in the sensible, so in the intelligible being it is necessary that there be something which corresponds to matter and something which corresponds to form. Unless this were so in the case of every abstract intelligence whose object of thought is something other than itself there could be no plurality in the abstract forms, nor is any form absolutely free from potentiality except the first form which thinks nothing *extra se*. Quiddity and essence, in the first form are identical; the other abstract forms differ in some mode in their quiddity and essence. Unless there existed this genus of existents, it would be impossible to think the plurality in abstract forms. Similarly, were we ignorant of this nature of the intellect it would be impossible for us to understand that the abstract motive powers are intelligences. It is consequently possible that the hylic intellect think the active intellect. As an additional proof of this possibility Averroes offers the rather doubtful proof of Themistius that since the hylic intellect thinks the hylic forms, it is much worthier of thinking the immaterial forms! It must, again, be stated concerning the hylic intellect that the principle which states that that which receives ought have in itself actually nothing of that which it receives, cannot be applied absolutely to it. We are not to understand that the hylic intellect *qua recipiens* is not anything at all, but rather that it is not actually anything, or part of that which it receives. The hylic intellect although potentially an intellect, and passive insofar as it is receptive of the hylic and abstract forms, exists actually although it is not

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[49] The same criticism applies as well to the active intellect, and the *intellectus speculativus*. As he indicates in his argument, in the same comment (p. 150F), his reasoning applies to these as well.

[50] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 151D.

an actual existent. Insofar as it is potentially an intellect it corresponds to matter although it is not identical with prime matter. As an actually existing something one would expect it to possess some form, but insofar as it receives or is capable of receiving all forms, what form could possibly remain which it could possess without becoming an actual existent? The hylic intellect may truly enough be the place of forms, but beyond this Averroes' conception of the nature of the hylic intellect is by no means satisfactory. His logic has again led him to apply to it attributes which are incompatible and which in no manner can be satisfactorily reconciled.

Averroes' conception of the nature and function of the active intellect is likewise somewhat uncertain and suffers from the same difficulties as his views concerning the hylic intellect and the *intellectus speculativus*. According to one interpretation[51] of the function of the active intellect, its function is the actualization of the potential intelligibles through the extraction of the universals in the *formae imaginativae*. These forms are then regarded as moving the hylic intellect in such a mode that the reception of them constitutes thinking. Another view,[52] which presents a slight variation from the view which has just been presented, maintains that it is the function of the active intellect to actualize both the hylic intellect and the potential intelligibles. According to this view the active intellect becomes the form of the hylic intellect through its "illuminating" influence. However, the intelligibles *qua* actual must be regarded as the forms of the hylic intellect also. To insist that the hylic intellect is actualized through both is to say that it takes two forms to make one existent. This one may suppose Averroes would certainly deny.[53]

Like the hylic intellect, the active intellect must be regarded

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[51] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 140E; *ibid.*, p. 146E; Bk. III, com. 18, p. 161B.

[52] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 152B.

[53] Averroes, in fact, does deny such a possibility. Were the hylic intellect actualized by the active intellect directly, there would be no need of the *formae imaginativae* in apprehension, since in such a case the intelligibles would come directly from the active intellect. (Cf. Bk. III, com. 18, p. 161B.)

as abstract, impassive, and unmixed.[54] Its substantial nature is activity. It cannot be in any way a potentiality. In order that it be possible for it to create all forms it is necessary that it be unmixed or free from matter, since *qua* material, its creative capacity would be limited to the purely individual, and it would itself become an individual hylic faculty. Compared with the hylic intellect from the point of view of nobility, the active intellect precedes by virtue of the principle that the agent is nobler than the patient, and the principle than its matter. It must, therefore, be thought, according to Aristotle,[55] that the hylic intellect is the lowest in order of the abstract intellects since its action,—which is passion,—is diminished by their action. The distinction between the active and hylic intellects can be perceived only through the difference in their actions. Both are intermittent in their action in regard to the objects which exist as singulars, but regarded absolutely, both are eternally functioning, and suffer no intermittence whatever. The hylic intellect, then, must be regarded as actually thinking eternally, in the absolute sense, while the active intellect is constantly abstracting. Now, strange as it may seem, Averroes distinguishes between the knowledge of the active intellect and that of the passive or hylic intellect by asserting that actual knowledge as identical with the thing known refers to something proper to the active intellect, whereas the intelligible proper to the hylic intellect is a form which is not *intellectus in se*.[56] The commentator in a later passage distinctly contradicts himself upon this point insofar as he asserts that that which the intellect abstracts is made intellect when the intellect separates it and thinks it.[57] From the standpoint of priority the potential intellect is continued with us prior to the active intellect, although universally, and regarded absolutely and not in relation to the individual, the hylic intellect is not continued with us in this

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[54] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 19, p. 162A.

[55] Averroes is here making a deduction. If it were abstract it would be eternal, but Aristotle's discussion (according to *De Anima*, 430A, 10–23) leads one to believe that he regarded the hylic intellect as generable and corruptible, and consequently not abstract.

[56] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 19, p. 162E.

[57] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 174E.

mode but is rather posterior in time.[58] Is Averroes really consistent in his view concerning the posteriority of the hylic intellect as regarded absolutely? Can two intelligences which are admitted to be eternal and abstract differ according to priority and posteriority? Does eternity admit of degrees? Averroes seems to have nodded once more. According to neither mode in which Averroes uses the term eternity is he logically and consistently able to apply the distinction of priority or posteriority to the intellects. Co-eternity alone is admissible.

None of the intellects of which Averroes speaks is shrouded with more mystery than the *intellectus speculativus:* with no other does he seem more contradictory in his statements. This intellect, we have already stated, constitutes one of the innovations of Averroes. That Aristotle would have introduced the *intellectus speculativus* into his treatise on the intellects seems unlikely since matter and form seem the essential principles in such a situation as we are facing, and with these and the other subsidiary causes which he accepts he would undoubtedly have attempted to present his solution. One cannot assume that Averroes' introduction of the *intellectus speculativus* is the result of a corrupted text which the commentator might have possessed. Averroes clearly recognized that Aristotle speaks only of two intellects, the one of which is passive, and the other active.[59] Could Averroes have derived his ideas from the view of the intellect as possessing a theoretical and a practical capacity? For such an opinion there seems some ground for belief. But Averroes' treatment of the *intellectus speculativus*, and his dis-

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[58] If one may judge from the Latin, Averroes' text must have been corrupt at this point. The Greek refers to the priority in time in the individual of potential knowledge. Universally this is not true. Averroes refers the question of priority to the hylic intellect. Cf. *De Anima*, 430a 19–21 with Averroes' text to Bk. III, com. 20, p. 162F.

[59] In Bk. III, com. 5, p. 149E, Averroes clearly states that according to Aristotle there are two parts of the intellect, the active and the passive. Yet immediately following this paragraph Averroes asserts that there are three parts of the intellect; the active, the passive, and the speculative. In the extremely interesting text and comment (Bk. III, com. 20) Averroes interprets the Aristotelian text as referring to three intellects. There is a possibility that Averroes regarded the text as ambiguous. One cannot be certain concerning this point however, as the Arabic text is not available. In Bk. III, com. 20, and in Bk. III, com. 36 p. 183D, Averroes seems also to assert as his own belief that there are these two intellects in the soul.

cussion of its nature and function show that the *intellectus speculativus* includes far more than merely that.

The speculative intelligibles, as we have already explained, are nothing other than the intelligibles which have been actualized through the agency of the active intellect. When received by the hylic intellect they become the form of the hylic intellect and are thought. Still Averroes insisted that they constitute a third intellect although it seems an impossible and illogical view. One would naturally infer that the *intellectus speculativus* could be nothing other than the actualized hylic intellect. To Averroes, however, the difficulty does not seem to have been evident. In his treatment of the problem which Aristotle raised concerning the possibility of thinking the unextended, Averroes presents another view[60] concerning the nature of the *intellectus speculativus*. It is necessary to assume, Averroes says by way of exposition, that there are in the intellect which exists in us two actions, that of making of the intelligibles, and that of receiving or thinking them.[61] Now intelligibles are made in us either naturally or voluntarily. The former group consists of the first propositions of whose origin we are ignorant: to the latter group belong all those intelligibles which are acquired from the first propositions or first principles. Despite the fact that Averroes maintains that we do not know how, whence, or when the first propositions become a part of our intellectual equipment, he proceeds to explain that the intelligibles possessed by us naturally must arise from something which is in itself intellect and free from matter. This is the active intellect. Since this is so, it is likewise necessary that the intelligibles which we receive from the first propositions be a composite of the principles known *per se* and the active intellect. The first principles or propositions must be regarded accordingly as functioning in the creation of the speculative intelligibles in such a mode that the *intellectus speculativus* must be regarded as something generated from the active intellect and the first principles, or propositions.[62] This composite mode of intelligibles he regards as voluntary, or

[60] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 184C.
[61] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 183F.
[62] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 184C.

subject to our own volition; the first propositions must be regarded as involuntary.[63] Now of every *actio* which results from the composition of two different things, it is necessary that the one of the elements entering into the composite serve as matter and the other as form. The intellect, therefore, which is in us is composed of the *intellectus speculativus* and the active intellect. The first propositions serve as matter and instrument; the active intellect as agent and efficient cause. This use of the term matter must however, be regarded merely as figurative. In this manner Averroes feels himself enabled to escape the inference that the *intellectus speculativus* must be regarded as generable and corruptible. Were it necessary to regard the first propositions as truly material, or as matter, the necessary consequence, since the active intellect is eternal, would be that through the composition of the two, the purely material would become eternal. That such be a possibility Averroes would under no circumstances be willing to admit. Still, as we have previously explained, the *intellectus speculativus* must, according to one mode, be regarded as generable and corruptible, and according to another mode, as eternal. Despite his effort to explain the *intellectus speculativus* as eternal, Averroes is here primarily concerned with the aspect according to which it is generable and corruptible. Averroes has, actually, found himself in a maze from which he struggles desperately o escape.

Thus far Averroes' concern has been the relation of the *intellectus speculativus* to the active intellect. His theological interest manifests itself in a way which expresses itself in a theory of conjunction. Without entering into that question, which is reserved for a separate chapter, it is nevertheless necessary to pass beyond the border in some degree. His interest in solving the problem of the possibility of thinking the unextended seems to have provided the motive which stimulated him to investigate the possibility of ultimate conjunction.

In this connection, the hylic intellect is regarded as eternal and as capable of apprehending both hylic and abstract forms.[64]

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[63] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 140E; com. 18, p. 161A and 161E.; com. 36, p. 183D.

[64] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 185C.

At the same time the hylic intellect is the subject of the speculative intelligibles and of the active intellect. This relation he expresses in the analogy of the transparent which receives both light and color simultaneously. The active intellect which serves as form is, accordingly, more perfect than the *intellectus speculativus* which serves as matter. The two combined provide the ultimate form within us,—the intellect by virtue of which the individual is capable of generating and thinking the intelligibles whenever he so desires or wills. Insofar as we have within us the speculative intellect we are also united with the active intellect. Apparently mindful of another difficulty, Averroes hastens to assert that the speculative intelligibles are coupled with us through the *formae imaginativae*.[65] When the speculative intelligibles exist in us potentially we may be said to be continued with the active intellect potentially; when the speculative intelligibles exist in us actually, we may be said to be continued with the active intellect actually. Averroes recognizes an intermediate stage according to which we are partially continued, or moved to continuation with the active intellect, insofar as a part only of them exist within us. In his highest state man thinks all those things and does all those actions which are proper to him.

One can view only with amazement and disappointment the kaleidoscopic variations in Averroes' theories, and the utter unconcern with which the commentator contradicts his own principles, and such conclusions to which he arrives in various parts of his work. Strange as it may seem, the hylic intellect, to which he earlier attributed the capacity of thinking, now has become a mere subject without any other apparent function whatever. In the development of his theory concerning the *intellectus speculativus*, the capacity or function of thinking is now assigned to it, while, according to another view which we previously explained, it is the hylic intellect which thinks the intelligibles, and the *intellectus speculativus* which possesses no apparent function. According to the theory which we have just presented the *intellectus speculativus* must be regarded as a

[65] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 185F.

gradual development within the individual.[66] However, without an image, or more exactly, an intelligible, one cannot think. Furthermore the active intellect is only potentially related to us in this mode. Would Averroes be satisfied with the inference that man cannot think? Or how would he explain the development of the intellectual faculty within the individual? At no point does Averroes meet with greater difficulties than in the development of his theory concerning the *intellectus speculativus*. The commentator at the beginning of his argument clearly assumes the existence within the individual of the active and the passive faculty; before he has reached the end, the active intellect is conceived as existing somewhere in the surrounding space, and is considered as a possible object of knowledge. The hylic intellect which he earlier regarded as generable and corruptible in its individual aspect is here needlessly regarded as eternal. The same uncertainty is to be found in his view concerning the first propositions. At one moment Averroes describes them as intuitions,[67] only to retrace his steps and explain them as originating through the active intellect.[68] A third view expresses the possibility that their origin lies in sense, although he hesitates to make a definite decision.[69] If these propositions be regarded as independent of sense, as Averroes certainly assumes in at least one case insofar as he describes them as issuing from the active intellect,—and the active intellect is at

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[66] As has already been indicated, Averroes' introduction of the *intellectus speculativus* seems a cumbersome superfluity. He seems to have in mind the Aristotelian conception of intellect in its theoretical, as well as its practical aspect. Averroes extends the conception of the former somewhat. Insofar as it is through the application of oneself to the pursuit of the speculative science that one is most likely to experience conjunction, Averroes makes his greatest use of this intellect in the exposition of his conjunction theory. Intellect in its practical aspect is of little importance from this point of view and one finds little reference to it. There are, in fact, only two minor references to it in the *De Anima*. These are: Bk. III, com. 5, p. 139A, com. 20, p. 165E. Neither statement adds anything to the discussion.

In Averroes' exposition there is no clue to the nature of the first propositions. It seems probable that he is referring to the principle of contradiction, and the law of excluded middle, or principles of this nature. The intelligibles which are developed from these probably represent the hierarchy of sciences. Averroes seems to be attempting to develop a complete rationalistic system.

[67] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 184A.

[68] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 184A.

[69] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 185F; com. 39, p. 188F.

the same time regarded as actually separated, in what manner could Averroes possibly explain the *intellectus speculativus* in its union with the active intellect to be the ultimate form in man without the postulation of an additional intellect or cause of some sort which could bring about a conjunction with the hylic intellect? Under no conditions is it possible to discover a satisfactory and logical solution to the problems which Averroes has raised. An extended inquiry serves merely to multiply the difficulties to which the commentator has fallen a victim.

II

Averroes' Theory of Conjunction

The problem of the possib lity of the conjunction of the hylic intellect of man with the abstract, or active intellect, is a problem which is by no means peculiar to Averroes. Its eschatological interest attracted both philosophers and theologians.[1] Both Jews and Arabs sought a solution to prove that such a conjunction is possible even within the life of man, and maintained that such is the goal or end of the speculative individual —a thesis whch Renan[2] asserts as dating far back to Persia and India, and the development of which doctrine may be found in al Farabi, in the tenth century, in almost as highly developed a form as in Averroes. The interest in the problem, then, must be traced to a theological as well as a psychological or metaphysical motive. That Averroes believed in the possibility of conjunction is certain: that he proved his thesis is, however, not so certain.

Averroes explains, in the introduction to the *De Animae Beatitudine*,[3] that it is his purpose to demonstrate the greatest

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[1] Steinschneider—*Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*—Berlin, 1893, pp. 27, 189.

[2] Renan, *Averroes*, pp. 94–95.

[3] Steinschneider regards the *De Animae Beatitudine* as of strange and unknown origin. (Cf. *Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*, p. 200). The introduction he regards as an addition to the original. The final chapter on the order of the principles is likewise not found in any of the other writings of the commentator. Both Munk and Renan seem to accept the writing as authentic and state that it is placed by Oceibeia in his list of the writings of Averroes. Except for the introduction and the final chapter on the order of the principles which the writer attributes to al Farabi, the writing agrees in almost every detail with the first two of the three treatises which Hercz has translated (*Drei Abhandlungen von Averroes* (*Vater und Sohn*) Berlin, 1869). The third of the treatises is clearly written by Averroes' son. The first treatise which Hercz has translated corresponds to the first three chapters of the *De Animae Beatitudine*. The second treatise corresponds with the fourth chapter of the *De Animae Beatitudine* with the exception of the introduction which is not common to the latter. The *Epistola de Connexione* corresponds with the first three chapters of the *De Animae Beatitudine*. According to these facts and the identity of the theory contained in these treatises, it seems impossible to question the origin of this work. The general trend of the argument as found at the end of the fourth chapter of the *De Animae Beatitudine* and of the end of the second treatise in Hercz seems to justify the final chapter on the order of the principles. Averroes seems merely to have taken over bodily the scheme which he duly asserts to be that of al Farabi.

happiness of the human soul. One may recognize in such a statement what seems to represent, as we have indicated above, a combination of the theological and metaphysical interest in the problem of the possibility of conjunction. His general mode of procedure is, first, to discover the nature of the hylic intellect, and secondly, to determine the mode according to which the abstract, or active, intellect is the cause in reducing the hylic itellect *qua* potential to an actual intellect.[4]

Since the intelligibles are related to the hylic intellect as are the sensibles to sense the hylic intellect must be regarded as a receptive faculty. Averroes likewise demonstrates that its reception involves no qualitative change in the hylic intellect, and consequently, it may be regarded as impassive.[5] At the same time the hylic intellect must also be regarded as unmixed, and as abstract or separable.[6] The hylic intellect has no nature but that of a possibility or capacity, since it is not mixed with matter. It has no subject appropriate to the nature of intellect, and is none of the existents until it thinks. As we have already indicated in the preceding chapter, the hylic intellect cannot be regarded as prime matter.[7] It must however, be considered an existent,[8] although it cannot be a substance, for the substance of one thing does not make known, or intelligible, the substance of another thing insofar as it is different from it.

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[4] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. II, p. 148 G–I; Hercz—*Drei Abhandlungen* p. 3; *Epistola de Connexione*, p. 155 I.

[5] Cf. *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 4, p. 137D–F. Averroes' distinction is very sharp indeed. Insofar as the hylic intellect is receptive of the forms it is to be regarded as passive, but insofar as there is no qualitative change, or permutation, it must be regarded as impassive—a distinction which Aristotle would hardly sanction.

[6] The proof which Averroes employs here is more complete than in the *De Anima*. The hylic intellect apprehends universals only. If the hylic intellect were an apprehensive faculty in the body, like sense, it could apprehend but one species of forms. If it were an apprehensive faculty in the body with a certain form, it could not: (1) apprehend the form appropriate to it, *e.g.* if the eye were *coloratus*, the visible faculty could not perceive color. (2) Neither could it apprehend itself, for hylic sensing, or apprehensive forms do not apprehend themselves, but what is other than themselves. (3) Nor could it receive contraries. If it did receive them, its reception would be imperfect and qualitatively altered. *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. II, p. 148M–149C; *Epistola de Connexione*, p. 156B–E; Hercz, pp. 9–12.

[7] Cf. *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 139B.

[8] Cf. *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 151C.

As a substance, the hylic intellect would necessarily be actual, as a consequence of which Averroes asserts, that the perceiving process could not function.[9]

Although Averroes believes that such must be the nature of the hylic intellect, the commentator observes a certain ambiguity in the text of Aristotle.[10] According to one interpretation, the Aristotelian conception of the nature of the hylic intellect is that it is passive and permutable.[11] The other possibility admits of its separability. Separability, Averroes argues, may be understood in two ways. The former of these regards the hylic intellect as independent of the body insofar as it is not a *virtus in corpore* and receiving the division of the body, although there may be a necessary relation existing between intellect and body through the mediation of the soul. According to this interpretation the separability is only partial. The second interpretation[12] involves total separability, insofar as separability, unequivocally, means total separability. Averroes finds no difficulty in the conception of capacities existing in this mode, particularly so in the case of the hylic intellect, since it is one in number in all men,[13] but plural *per accidens*. If the hylic intellect be regarded as one for the entire human race, it must also be regarded as eternal. The eternity of the hylic intellect enables it to think the eternal or abstract forms through the apprehension of which the ultimate happiness is assured to those individuals fortunate enough to apprehend them.

As we have already indicated, the problem of conjunction is

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[9] "Si quid enim ipsa esset substantia, tunc intelligibilia, quae sunt etiam per se formae rerum sensibilium non fierent: et essent secundum hoc intelligible et sensus res una omni ex parte: et ex ea parte, qua est intelligible non esset possibile cognoscere essentiam rerum. . . . Substantia enim unius rei non facit alterius rei substantiam intellectam, inquantum est alia ab ea."—*De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. II, p. 149L; *De Connexione*, p. 156G; Hercz, p. 20.

[10] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. II, p. 150A; *De Connexione*, p. 156K; Hercz, p. 24.

[11] Cf. footnote 5 (Chapter II).

[12] Averroes states that his second interpretation of the term separable is based on the interpretation given in the Physics, Bk. VIII. There is, however, no difference between the arguments as given by Averroes. The difference in interpretation must be ascribed to Averroes alone. The passage to which Averroes is referring is apparently Bk. VIII, Chap. 5.

[13] Cf. *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 146F.

founded upon a theological as well as a metaphysical interest. The problem in its metaphysical aspect is founded upon the problem raised by Aristotle as to whether or not it is possible for the intellect to think the unextended without being itself unextended.[14] This problem Aristotle failed to discuss despite his intention to do so. The unextended to which Aristotle refers, according to at least one modern commentator, refers to the objects of first philosophy,[15] which for Aristotle refers to the nature of Reality. For Averroes the unextended refers primarily to the intelligences or abstract intellects. The nature of the intellect as unextended is disregarded, for as we have observed, the intellect is in every instance regarded as abstract or separable despite the uncertainty which he has evinced in the single passage in the *De Animae Beatitudine.*[16] Averroes' failure to distinguish and define the degree of separability of the hylic and active intellects is undoubtedly one of the major causes for his difficulty, and leaves in the mind of the critical investigator of his theory an uncertainty which it is impossible to overcome. Although the uncertainty may not have been consciously present in the mind of the commentator, he is constantly vacillating in his ideas on abstraction, as we have already shown in part in the preceding chapter.

In the development of his proof of the possibility of conjunction Averroes follows Alexander. As Aristotle himself asserts, the intelligible is to the intellect as the sensible is to sense.[17] Just as in sense one finds three parts or elements, viz. the *recipiens*, or sense organ, the *receptum*, or form, and the *motor*, which is *extra animam*, so in the case of the intellect one finds three parts which correspond to those of sense. These are the *intellectus recipiens*, or hylic intellect; the *intellectus receptus*, or the intelligible which Averroes also speaks of as the acquired

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[14] *De Anima*, 431b, 17–19.

[15] Hicks—*De Anima*, Cf. the notes on 431b, 17–19, p. 542, and on 403b 15, p. 207.

[16] It seems strange that Averroes' son should consider his father as believing the hylic intellect to be mixed with the body, as he does in the treatise which he has left us. As Hercz rightly remarks, Averroes does not regard the hylic intellect as mixed with matter at all. Cf. Hercz—*Drei Abhandlungen*, p. 57 and note 2.

[17] *De Anima*, 429a, 13–15.

speculative concept or idea, and the *intellectus motor*, which is the active and abstract intellect.[18] It is, furthermore, necessary that everything which is potential shall become actual at some time in the same species or genus. Since the hylic intellect has in itself potentially the abstract intellect, Averroes argues, it follows necessarily that it become actual at some time. This reception is to be regarded as nothing other than to become one with it, that is, to be conjoined. One may note from the terminology which Averroes has so far employed a certain vacillation. The hylic intellect he has already proved abstract, yet in his mode of argument Averroes leaves one under the impression that the abstract intellect of which he has been speaking, which is the active intellect, is alone abstract. One would assume, naturally, that such actualization of the hylic intellect occurs with each and every act of cognition. On the contrary, Averroes ignores this process despite the fact that he maintains with Aristotle that the hylic intellect is actually none of the existents until it thinks. That he should ignore this process, or phase of the intellectual life seems due to his greater interest in the problem of ultimate conjunction. The actualization of the hylic intellect refers rather to the building up of a philosophical and speculative temperament,[19] in short, to the education of the individual, according to the individualistic phase of the problem. It may be compared with the habit of walking which is potentially present in the individual from the time of birth. The actualization of the habit comes only after the individual has arrived at a more mature stage in his development.[20] In this same mode, then, the hylic intellect proceeds into actuality when it is perfected by thinking the intelligibles, which is in accordance with its nature, and which it receives from the sensibles. As we have already remarked, the reception of the intelligibles on the part of the hylic intellect is accompanied by no qualitative change or permutation in the latter, as Averroes

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[18] *De Animae Beatitudine*, p. 150I; *Epistola de Connexione*, p. 157D; Hercz p. 31.

[19] *De Animae Beatitudine*, 151G; *Epistola de Connexione*, 158C; Hercz, p. 44.

[20] *De Animae Beatitudine*, p. 150L; *Epistola de Connexione*, p. 157G; Hercz, p. 35; *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 176E.

maintains is the case in sense perception where there is a qualitative change in the faculties of sense. The intellect is nothing except the things which it receives. Were it something else beside the things which it receives, it would follow that upon apprehending the abstract intellect there would be generated some new disposition. In such an event the hylic intellect would necessarily have to be regarded as a generable and corruptible faculty, as Alexander believes it to be. Now, it is impossible, according to Averroes, that a thing which had an origin should become eternal.[21] It is for this reason that Averroes assumes the eternity of the hylic intellect. If, however, the hylic intellect is nothing else than the things, or forms, which it receives, can it be an existent? That it is an existent Averroes has proved,[22] although he has asserted it is potential until actualized, and although an existent even *qua* potential, it is nevertheless not a substance.[23] Whether Averroes recognized the incompatibility of his various statements concerning this point it is impossible to state. The assertion that the hylic intellect is an existent is obviously contradictory to the assertion that it is nothing but the forms which it receives. In the ultimate actuality of the hylic intellect the active intellect must also be regarded as the form and end as well as the efficient cause. Of the difficulties of this view we shall have to speak later.

Accepting the theory of Themistius that the intelligibles are extracted through the agency of the active intellect from the sensibles, and that like begets, or produces like, Averroes asserts that it is even more worthy that the hylic intellect be joined with the abstract, or active intellect and that they become one in some individual.[24] According to the principle that nature

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[21] Cf. *De Anima*, com. 36, p. 175E; *De Animae Beatitudine*, p. 151A; *Epistola de Connexione*, p. 157H; Hercz, p. 36.

[22] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 151C.

[23] Munk (*Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe*) quotes from some passage in the unedited Arabic middle commentary that Averroes asserts as his final opinion that the hylic intellect cannot be regarded as a substance. Munk's exposition which is very brief and general is based upon the middle commentary of Averroes which still remains unedited and is extant in the original Arabic.

[24] *De Animae Beatitudine*, p. 151C; *Epistola de Connexione*, p. 157I; Hercz, p. 37.

does nothing in vain it is necessary that every sensible form be perceivable by some individual or species of individuals. Unless this were so divine providence would have created in vain some form which could never proceed from potentiality to actuality. So in the case of the abstract intellect, although there may be some societies of men who may not be able to think this intellect, there are necessarily others who do attain to this degree of development. Averroes expresses the relationship by the analogy of light.[25] It is the sunlight which makes colors visible. Nevertheless, he maintains, that which makes something visible should in itself be more visible than that which it makes visible. The same relation, he holds, must apply to the relation existing between the hylic and the active intellect. Now the capacity by which the *abstracta* are received is a capacity which is developed in the *intellectus speculativus*, which according to the present theory is nothing other than the hylic intellect *qua* actualized by the agency of the active intellect.[26] The relation of this capacity is to the actualized speculative intellect as the hylic intellect is to the soul, and must be considered from the point of view of rank.

Just as in the realm of the generable and corruptible species it is necessary that there be found that which is potential and that which is actual, so in the case of intellect must there be found that which corresponds to these. The potential is here represented by the hylic intellect, as we have already shown. That by which the hylic intellect is actualized is the active intellect. This process of actualization in the case of the hylic intellect is a twofold process. The first phase of this actualization takes place through the medium of the hylic forms which have been stripped of their matter, since no hylic object can operate upon the immaterial except *qua* form alone. Now whatever performs the function of intellect is intellect necessarily.[27] Consequently the hylic forms as they are found to exist in the

[25] Hercz, p. 38.

[26] Cf. *De Animae Beatitudine*, p. 151E; *Epistola de Connexione*, p. 157 L; Hercz, p. 39–40. The text in the *De Animae Beatitudine* is corrupt.

[27] Averroes is here undoubtedly referring to the theory of Aristotle that the mind in its active operation is identical with its objects. Cf. *De Anima*, 431b, 16–17.

virtus imaginativa are intelligibles potentially. These intelligibles *qua* potential are in turn actualized by the active intellect. In their state of actuality they in turn move the hylic intellect in such a manner that the latter is itself made an actual intellect. Now the active intellect which Averroes maintains to be related to the hylic intellect as light to sight, is properly more intelligible to the hylic intellect than the intelligibles themselves.[28] However, just as many existents do not receive their ultimate actuality except through some medium, as youth follows infancy, or through custom and habit, as industriousness comes only through the constant application of effort, so the hylic intellect does not receive or become conjoined with the active intellect except through the medium of the intelligibles. Man alone is a rational being but among men only those who have become perfected in the speculative sciences are enabled to experience such a conjunction.

By the speculative development within the individual Averroes refers truly enough to the contemplative life which leads the individual to devote himself to philosophy, which insofar is really a speculation concerning the highest objects of knowledge, the divine, and morals. But of even more importance is the discipline which such study provides. Education as such is a discipline which equips the learner to frame generalizations and to classify in some systematic order his intellectual acquisitions. Averroes would most assuredly agree to the former of these especially. In his opinion, in which he seems influenced primarily by Avempace[29] on this point, and in which he is in apparent agreement with Aristotle, Averroes maintains that the continued abstraction of universal forms continues within the intellectual life of the individual. The actual intelligibles, truly enough, are universals but just as the genus may itself be a species of the highest or next higher genus, so one may continue to abstract the universals until one arrive ultimately to some

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[28] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. IV, p. 152C; Hercz, p. 52.

[29] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. III, p. 151F; Hercz, p. 40; *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 181A; Hannes, *Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*, pp. 37, 38. The text on this point in the *De Animae Beatitudine* is corrupt. Cf. also *Epistola de Connexione*, p. 157M.

form which is absolutely immaterial and which logically corresponds to the *summum genus*. Technically such is the nature of the development or actualization of the hylic intellect. It is through the formation of such generalizations that the individual arrives ultimately to his highest perfection. Viewed as a whole it is a development which may be said to begin at birth but which finds its culmination only with the complete rationalization of the individual. For this the speculative sciences constitute merely the means. The period most favorable for such exercise is naturally the declining years when the allurements of youth and the pleasures of sense no longer make their appeal, for such spiritual development is the exact counterpart of corporeal perfection.[30] That it is difficult Averroes admits and because of its difficulty it can be attained only by the few. It is not the haven of the mob. Such is the nature of the speculative intellect and its progressive realization.

According to the present theory of conjunction which we have been presenting, as has already been stated, the speculative intellect has been considered by Averroes as simply the hylic intellect in its process of actualization or perfection, and Averroes does not hesitate to use the terms hylic intellect and speculative intellect interchangeably. In fact, it is the former which finds the more frequent usage. One need not then regard it as more than a mere whim of the commentator when he proceeds to assert that upon the advancement of the hylic intellect, rather than the speculative intellect, to the highest stage of its actualization it becomes a unified substance of being,—through the completion of its systematic rationalization,—so that it be enabled to think itself. Upon the attainment of such a development it is abstract intellect necessarily, and insofar as it is the property of abstract intellects to think themselves,[31] the same property must be regarded as now inherent in this intellect. Such apprehension must be possible for it either *ex se* or through some other agency. That it cannot do so *ex se* is evident from the principle that nothing moves itself. It follows, then, that it

[30] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. III, p. 151H; *Epistola de Connexione*, p. 158D; Hercz, *Drei Abhandlungen*, pp. 44, 45.
[31] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. IV, p. 152I; Hercz, p. 55.

possess this property through conjunction, and that this conjunction occur without any new disposition developed through a new generation. In this order the hylic intellect thinks, first, the active intellect, and secondly, itself and all things. Having arrived at this stage the hylic intellect may be regarded as active intellect, and as capable not only of generating all intelligibles, but also of thinking those forms which are pure intelligibles, the abstract intelligences which have no materiality whatever in their natures. Such intelligences are akin to the divine insofar as in them there may be found the *res intellecta* and the *res intelligens*, such as is not to be found in the lower orders of intelligibles, for in this latter class there is not to be found the capacity for self-intuition. None of this class, which subsist in or through matter, can be regarded as intellect actually. Such intelligibles are made actual only through the energizing capacity of the active intellect. Unwilling to pause at this point, however, Averroes proceeds to explain that with the conjunction of the hylic intellect the intelligible is itself raised to the order of hylic intellect. The final relation is such that the *intelligens* is the hylic intellect, the *res intellecta* is the active intellect, and the intelligible which was formerly a form in matter is raised to the divine essence of hylic intellect.[32] These three are then one in essence but three in disposition. In this mode then it is evident that the active intellect has served not only as the efficient cause, but as the formal and final cause as well.

Were one to stop here, he would have but part of the tale. Averroes does not insist that such a conjunction remain forever on such a plane. The perfection truly enough remains, but the conjunction itself is interrupted upon occasion. What is the cause for such interruption? Averroes nowhere gives us any definite intelligible explanation. If one may venture a conjecture his reply would be "experience", for Averroes maintains that he had experienced such a conjunction during his life-

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[32] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. IV, p. 153A.

time.[33] On the other hand the conjunction process does not pause with the mere conjunction of the hylic and the active intellects. It is to be regarded rather as the divine will that all forms which are generically eternal ascend from one fair form to that which is numerically one, and each to receive such a degree of reward and advancement as is compatible with its nature. Of these forms the first is first because uncaused. Its object is itself, and is consequently an intuitive self-consciousness. The subordinate forms have their essence by virtue of the first. The same divine capacity extends throughout the universe to the lowest of its elements. To prime form and prime matter even is granted the opportunity for ultimate absorption into the highest by the gradual assumption of one form after the other, attaining the form of humanity and ultimately the form of the separate existents.[34]

Averroes closes his discussion of the theory of conjunction in the *De Animae Beatitudine* with a description of the order of the principles[35] which he attributes to Al Farabi and with which presentation Averroes' theory, as contained in this work and the others which we have thus far mentioned, seems in essential agreement.

The principles by which bodies and their accidents are constituted are six in number, each of which is located in a corresponding plane. To the first plane is assigned the First Cause which he identifies with God. To the other planes are assigned, respectively, Second Cause, Active Intellect, Soul, Form, and Matter. The First Cause is one in all modes, abstract, and cannot be plural; to the others plurality is common. The first three are neither body nor belong to body, while soul, form, and matter although not being themselves body, nevertheless belong to body.

The genera of body are, like the preceding, six in number and are respectively: celestial body, rational animal, irrational

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[33] "Dieses war mir zu dieser Zeit meines Lebens ersichtlich, und Gott ertheilt seine Gnade wem er will." Hercz, *Drei Abhandlungen*, p. 56. This statement does not occur in any other works of Averroes which are available.

[34] *De Animae Beatitudine*, p. 153B; Hercz, p. 55.

[35] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. V, p. 153G, ff.

animal, vegetable, mineral, and the four elements. Of these the world is composed. God as the First Cause, is regarded as the proximate cause of the essence of the Second Causes and of the active intellect. The Second Causes are the causes of the celestial bodies, each of which is dependent upon some one of the Second Causes, and is given a definite rank. To the care of the first of these is given the prime sphere; to the last, the moon, the intermediate causes being assigned to the intermediate spheres, the total number of second causes depending upon the number of the celestial bodies. Such causes are to be considered the Angels.

To the active intellect is assigned the providence of the rational animal. The apprehension of this intellect is the highest plane of the perfection of our soul since it is our end and happiness. In such a state of perfection the human soul does not need the inferior forms; its perfection is eternal, once it has attained this level of development. In the theological scheme which seems to have been superimposed upon this astrological and psychological classification, the active intellect corresponds to the *Spiritus Sanctus*.[36]

The forms or principles existing on the plane of soul are most generally and conveniently classified under the categories of the souls of the skies, of rational animals, and of irrational animals. The classification of the forms of rational animals includes the various divisions of the psychological equipment of the rational individual and their definite relation to the sensitive, ethical, and speculative habits of man, as well as his practical or vocational activities.

Differing in species and essence from these souls are the celestial souls. Such are moved with a continuous circular motion and are nobler and more perfect than the human souls and those of the lower forms of life. They are the intelligences of the spheres, always actual, and thinking eternally. Contrasted with the souls of the sublunary sphere, they have neither a sensitive nor an imaginative soul, although their thinking soul

[36] Mohammedanism, like Christianity, entertains a doctrine of the Holy Spirit. According to Rodwell, (*Koran*, p. 346, fn. 3), Mohammed at first confuses, then ultimately identifies it with the angel Gabriel.

may be regarded as analogous to our rational soul. Their intelligibles are the abstract substances, the First Cause and themselves. As we have already remarked, the First Cause thinks only itself, and hence is a sort of divine self-consciousness or self-intuition. In some mode it must be regarded as containing within itself, or being itself all the existents. Plurality of thinking which is the characteristic of the inferior Second Causes is not of equal nobility with the nature of the divine intellection. The intellection of the souls inferior to these, and among this group the hylic intellect according to this system is to be placed, is a generated function as distinguished from the intuition of the higher forms or causes. Such souls are mere capacities and preparations which are actualized through the reception of the hylic or intelligible form of the concrete sensible objects. Such forms are separable. Inferior to these are the forms of the four elements with their respective matters, and ultimately, prime form and prime matter.

Whether or not Averroes accepted the scheme as it is portrayed by Al Farabi it is perhaps impossible to state with any absolute certainty. That he did, however, agree with it generally one may believe with some degree of certainty. As we have already observed Averroes asserts that he had experienced a conjunction during his own life.[37] As one, then, who believed he had undergone such a mystical absorption, he would naturally be led to believe in its possibility. His high regard for his master, Aristotle, would seem to provide the suggestions as to what lines any such scheme of conjunction should pursue, and to this his faith as a Mussulman may certainly be assumed to have contributed something. In addition to this one may be reminded of the fact that Averroes has followed the hierarchical arrangement of forms of Aristotle with comparatively little deviation, and such deviation as there may be is very likely due to a misinterpretation or to the intellectual background and environment in which he was reared and educated. From the influences of the latter one can never completely free oneself. Independently of background and intellectual environment, however, one may

[37] Hercz, *Drei Abhandlungen*, p. 56.

note in the *De Animae Beatitudine*[38] as well as elsewhere that Averroes believed in the possibility of each form ascending ultimately to a form which is numerically one and ascending to such a state of perfection as there is in the first existent absolutely. That Averroes agrees *in toto* with the system which he has appended to his treatise *De Animae Beatitudine*, the evidence which we have accumulated does not prove; that he agrees in general with such an arrangement, we feel, is sufficiently certain. Independently of the problem of Averroes' acceptance of it as a fundamental part of his doctrine, the primary importance of the entire chapter is its pedagogical character, or as the commentator has put it, a means of elevating the understanding for those desiring to know great things.[39]

A second and somewhat different theory, so far as details are concerned, is to be found in the treatise "Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunction."[40] Averroes here builds up his argument upon the basis of the Aristotelian criticism against the Platonic doctrine of the divisibility of the soul.[41] The soul may be regarded as a hierarchy of souls or spiritual forms, each with its particular or special subject but behind all of which is a single unitary soul binding all together. There exists a two-fold relation b tween each of the parts: an existential and a conceptual relationship. Through its existential[42] relationship a lower form perfects itself through a higher form so as to attain such a form through which it is more capable of thinking than in its previous state of imperfection. Averroes is here making a broad application of the Aristotelian conception of the first and second actuality. The conceptual relationship in hylic perception refers to the apprehension of a lower by a higher faculty, in the apprehension of

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[38] *De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. IV, p. 153E; Hercz—*Drei Abhandlungen*, pp. 55, 56; Munk (*Mélanges*, p. 453) gives very briefly a similar view of the ascension to the divine. He has apparently taken his information from the latter portion of the treatise on the possibility of conjunction.

[39] "Est quidem radix una elevandi intellectum intendentibus scire magna." —*De Animae Beatitudine*, Chap. V, p. 153G.

[40] "*Des Averroes Abhandlung Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*—Halle —1892, translated by Hannes. The translater has completed only the introduction and the first two proofs of Averroes.

[41] *De Anima*, 411b, 5–14.

[42] Hannes—*Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*—pp. 31, 32.

the abstract forms, to the apprehension of a higher form through the lower form. According to the former relationship, the sensitive faculty, for example, may be regarded as being perfected through the imaginative faculty while according to the latter relation the imaginative faculty is to be understood as apprehensive of the sensitive forms. Both of these Averroes speaks of as modes of conjunction. In both of these modes is the hylic intellect conjoined with the imaginative faculty, although the former is abstract and free from mixture with the body. Insofar as the images, or *formae imaginativae*, contain also the intelligibles, the latter, Averroes rightly affirms, must be generated and corrupted with the generation and corruption of the images themselves—an observation which is not always regarded by the commentator. This same process of progressive perfection or actualization, in the case of the intellect, consists in the continued abstraction of the intelligibles and the removal of the primitive and more material aspects of the image.

In the case of the higher, or abstract forms by which Averroes refers to the intelligences of the spheres, the two modes of conjunction are identical.[43] This Averroes asserts undoubtedly because of the fact that such intelligences are regarded as units and incomposite in contrast with the soul which is a composite insofar as it is logically, at least, a combination of faculties or powers. The separate intelligences, however, are intellects only without any sensitive, imaginative or nutritive faculties whatever. Averroes does not, however, mean by this that the abstract intellects have only themselves as the object of their thinking. Within the hierarchy of such forms each form is able to contribute to the actualization of the form immediately inferior to it without the latter assisting in any mode in the development or perfection of that by which it is in turn perfected.[44]

The problem of conjunction depends upon the possibility of the interaction in some mode between the abstract intellect which

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[43] "Die Seele des Begreifens ist aber die Seele der Existenz und die Seele der Existenz ist die Seele des Begreifens"—Hannes, *Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*, p. 40.

[44] *Ibid.*

here is the active intellect, and the speculative intellect.[45] This mode of interaction, which permits the conjunction, is, according to Averroes, a conceptual relation, that is, a thinking of the active intellect on the part of the lower, insofar as that which is perfected thinks that by which it is perfected. Averroes however, recognizes the difficulty of his situation. In the case of abstract intellects the existential and the conceptual relations are identical; in the case of the forms in the soul they are not identical. There should also be an existential conjunction as well, although according to Averroes' definition the nature of existential relation in the case of the hylic forms is not identical with the existential relation in the case of the abstract intellects. In other terminology, the problem resolves itself into that of the non-eternal becoming eternal. If the two types of conjunction be possible, the hylic intellect may be assumed to ascend to eternal existence.

That the two types of conjunction are possible is a matter of which Averroes is certain.[46] As a matter of fact, according to Averroes, the active intellect enters into an existential conjunction from the very beginning of life. This is evident from the fact that there exist within us the two parts of the intellect, the one of which is the hylic intellect and the other which generates the intelligibles which are found potentially in the images. The axioms or first propositions are, however, derived from pure experience insofar as they are absolutely true, and apply to a world where contingency is unknown. In the actualization of the hylic intellect the active intellect serves as form. Contrary to the view, however, which Averroes has expressed in his commentary on the *De Anima*, that it is through the *virtus imaginativa* that man is a generable and corruptible being, Averroes here maintains that the form by virtue of which man is generable and corruptible is the first actuality of the hylic intellect by which he means the speculative intellect. According

[45] "Diese Auseinandersetzung gruendet sich, wie wir gesagt haben, auf zwei Voraussetzungen; die erste, dass der Intellekt *in habitu* mit dem aktiven eine Conjunktion der Form mit dem Traeger der Form eingeht und die zweite, dass diese Conjunktion eine Conjunktion des Begreifens ist." *Ibid*, p. 45.

[46] Hannes—*Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*, p. 47; Cf. *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 183D.

of this mode of the functioning of the active intellect, the contunction seems more like a conjunction of form with matter rather than that of the agent with the patient. Averroes is to be understood as referring to an internal activity or functioning within the hylic intellect somewhat after the manner in which the formative activity of the potter is contained within his pots.[47] In this mode the active intellect continues as a form in the hylic intellect as long as the complete conjunctive process has not yet taken place. The active intellect *qua* form is not, however, apprehended as long as the *intellectus in habitu* exists within us as a real existent. With the cancellation of all the potentiality within the hylic intellect there must occur a second sort of conjunction which is that of thinking the active intellect. With the elevation of the hylic intellect to this plane of complete actuality the conjunction is now of the order of a perfected existent with a perfect existent.

One further step remains in the completion of the process of conjunction. Were the *intellectus speculativus*, or to use an equivalent term, the *intellectus in habitu*, to remain, the commentator feels his theory would be exposed to the criticism that something which had an origin would become eternal. The generated faculty in this instance is the *intellectus speculativus*, and this it would be which should conceive the active intellect. Averroes' solution of the difficulty is to be found in what seems a rather naive explanation. The *intellectus in habitu* is destroyed[48] at the very moment in which the active intellect raises it, and disappears completely. At the same time the hylic intellect which is the absolute capacity for receiving all forms is conjoined with the active intellect, and raised immediately from a generable and corruptible existence to an eternal existence through a second functioning of the active intellect.

Even a casual observation is sufficient to show that Averroes varies considerably in the details of his proofs of the possibility

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[47] Hannes—*Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*, p. 48; Cf. *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 18, p. 161C. According to the former the active intellect is form; according to the latter passage it is not a form. The analogy used is the same in both instances. A comparison of pp. 48, 50 in Hannes show a similar hesitation and uncertainty.

[48] Hannes—*Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*, p. 53.

of conjunction. His theory as expounded in the last of the long excursuses in the *De Anima*[49] reveals variations which are even more striking.

That there are within us two intellects, the one of which is passive and the other active in function, is a doctrine which is common to all of Averroes' theories. Averroes' view of the relationship between the two varies, however, in some slight details, despite the fact that the commentator maintains that the active function is related to the passive faculty potentially at first. The view which Averroes presents in the *De Animae Beatitudine* agrees completely with the view which Averroes has taken in the earlier comments in the *De Amina*. Here the active intellect may be regarded as more strictly related to the hylic intellect in a purely potential relationship insofar as the active intellect generates the intelligibles which in turn move the hylic intellect into actuality in such a mode that it is the hylic intellect which thinks them. The relationship is thus indirect rather than direct. A second view regards the active intellect as not only moving the hylic intellect through the medium of the intelligibles but also as intervening more directly and acting upon the hylic intellect through an illuminatory process, or as the influence of the potter may be found in the clay of which his pots are molded.[50] In this mode the active intellect serves itself as a form, although Averroes may be seen to vary even in this interpretation.

Averroes' theory concerning the function of the speculative intellect in its reference to conjunction varies no less than does his theory concerning the other phases of the problem. In the *De Animae Beatitudine*, as we have remarked, the speculative intellect is apparently identical with the hylic intellect. In

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[49] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, pp. 174D–184C. Steinschneider, (*Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*, p. 209), states that Saul Kohen Aschkenasi mentions in his *Questions* that he composed a *Buch der Ziele* in which, according to the view of his teacher Elia del Medigo, he proves that Averroes has expressed his last and correct view in the *De Anima*, com. 36. Munk, citing from the unedited Middle Commentary, shows that Averroes himself referred to his commentaries as containing his real opinions. (Munk —*Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe*, p. 443.)

[50] Cf. Hannes, *Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*, pp. 48 and 50; *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 18, p. 161C.

fact one seldom sees it mentioned. While Averroes regards the speculative intellect, in his treatise on the possibility of conjunction, as the first actuality of the hylic intellect,[51] he nevertheless regards it as a distinct intellect in the remainder of his treatise. His theory of its ultimate destruction is common to no other treatise of his. Strictly speaking, the *intellectus speculativus* is nothing other than the actual intelligibles although insofar as they are such they may also be regarded as intellect, since intellect and its objects may be regarded as identical. It is undoubtedly for this reason that Averroes is at one moment referring to them collectively, and, at another moment, as a plurality.

A second view of the *intellectus speculativus* regards that intellect as a composite of the axioms or first propositions and the active intellect, a doctrine which is suggested in the treatise "*On the Possibility of Conjunction*" but which is not developed there.[52] The first propositions, Averroes hesitatingly asserts, must be derived from the active intellect because of their intuitive nature[53] and their apparent independence of sense.[54] Insofar as their character is such they are involuntary. From them, combined with the active intellect, are deducible intelligibles which are within the volition of the individual.

Whether Averroes has recognized the difficulty or not, the commentator has developed two theories of the speculative intellect, in his commentary which are hardly compatible and can in no manner satisfactorily explain the problem he has set out to solve. His earlier view which regarded the speculative intellect as merely the speculative intelligibles, and as moving the hylic intellect into actuality may truly enough be satisfactory insofar as the relationship to the hylic intellect is concerned. However, insofar as the active intellect is itself abstract and not, according to this view, directly able to function upon

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[51] Hannes, *Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*, pp. 47, 48.
[52] Hannes, *Ibid*, p. 47.
[53] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 184A.
[54] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 39, p. 188F. Averroes realizing he has previously explained that the intelligibles are derived from the *formae imaginativae* in the preceding citation attempts in an uncertain manner to connect them with these forms. His uncertainty is indicated as well in comment 39.

the hylic intellect, there is left no mode by which any relationship or contact can be established between the hylic intellect on the one hand, and the speculative intellect and the active intellect on the other hand. With his assertion that the first propossitions are of an intuitional character Averroes has posited two types of abstract existents through which he can by no sort of combination explain the nature, or possibility of human thought. Equally contradictory to his earlier theory is the assertion that the ultimate form in us through which we generate and think the intelligibles is composed of the speculative intellect and the active intellect, whereas his former assertion assigned this capacity of thinking to the hylic intellect.[55] According to his later view the hylic intellect becomes the mere subject of the former, the speculative and the active *qua* composite. In such a system the speculative intellect serves as matter, although that term is applied by analogy only, while the active intellect serves as form. When, then, the speculative intelligibles are coupled with us potentially, the active intellect is coupled with us potentially; when the speculative intelligibles exist in us actually, the active intellect is said to exist in us actually. Averroes recognizes an intermediate stage in which certain of the intelligibles exist in us actually, and certain potentially. In such a state we are said to be moved toward continuation, while at the same time the active intellect is coupled with us in part[56] When that motion is complete the intellect is coupled with us in all modes, and man is said to think through it all the existents and perform all those actions which are proper to him. In this mode, Averroes says following Themistius, man is like God in that he is in a certain way all the existents and knows them in a certain mode, for the existents are nothing other than their intelligibles or quiddities.

Is it the hylic intellect which is conjoined with the active intellect according to this exposition which Averroes gives us in the *De Anima?* Averroes we stated has definitely distinguished between the hylic intellect and the speculative intellect, yet it

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[55] Cf. my discussion on this point in the first chapter.
[56] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 36, p. 186A.

is the speculative intellect which is developed to the very limits of its perfection and upon the attainment of which the individual is enabled to think the abstract forms. In no way apparently has Averroes proved the possibility of conjunction.

One may ask as well, why, according to another theory,[57] should it be necessary that the speculative intellect be perfected before it is destroyed? In fact, for what reason should it be destroyed at all? Averroes here states clearly that the speculative intellect is the first actuality of the hylic intellect. To the latter question Averroes would reply that it is necessary because of the fact that the active intellect is at first conjoined with the hylic intellect potentially only and exercises the first of its functions upon it as long as the hylic intellect does not perfect its existence through which the intelligibles arise in it. The second function of the active intellect is exercised when the hylic intellect exists *in actu*, and this is the function which causes its conjunction. Despite Averroes' argumentation, insofar as he has asserted that the speculative intellect is the first actuality of the hylic intellect and that the further development is dependent upon the pursuit of the speculative sciences, the commentator proceeds to declare the speculative intellect as generable and corruptible and consequently, in order to satisfy the principle that a thing which had an origin cannot become eternal, insists upon the destructibility, in fact, the necessary destruction of this intellect. Now if it be true, and Averroes asserts it to be true, that the stronger form causes the disappearance of the weaker or inferior form, why should not the speculative intellect be destroyed immediately rather than upon its completion and perfection? In the same mode why should not the hylic intellect be destroyed as well? In addition to this, insofar as the speculative intellect logically can be nothing else than the hylic intellect in its highest perfection, and consequently an intellect actually, the destruction of the speculative intellect can be nothing short of the reduction of the hylic intellect to its original state of potentiality, and as a consequence nothing whatever has been gained. In practical terms, such a

[57] Hannes, *Ueber die Moeglichkeit der Conjunktion*, p. 54.

process would imply the total loss of all which might have been gained through the diligent pursuit of the speculative life. The assumption that with the destruction of the speculative intellect it is impossible to object that something generable and corruptible had become eternal is entirely defeated by the fact that through the second action of the active intellect the hylic intellect is raised *instanter* to the level of the eternal. It is evident that the second function of the active intellect is entirely foreign to its nature which is the abstraction of the intelligibles elements from their images, or in the case of the first propositions a deductive capacity. Averroes has merely substituted for one difficulty another which is equally as hard, and in no way has he met the situation with an adequate solution.

Averroes' difficulties however, do not end here. Insofar as the intelligibles are dependent upon the images in which they are contained potentially and, as Averroes admits, consequently disappear, one is led to inquire in what manner it is possible that a speculative intellect should ever exist. Averroes' conception of the speculative intellect is, as we have seen, the result of education, whose fruits are most particularly enjoyed in the time of old age. A pleasing dream it may be, but a dream and an ideal it must forever remain. Were there a memory for the universals one might conceive the possibility of such a development, but the only memory of which Averroes can boast is the memory which stores away nothing but the individual images. The only type of thinking to which Averroes is permitted a claim is nothing more than the merely conscious experience of the average type. To nothing more will the arrangement of his intellectual and perceptive faculties admit.

Averroes' almost hopeless confusion in his definition and conception of the eternal and its application to the world of generation and corruption is not without consequences to his doctrine of conjunction as well. The logical implication of the eternity of both hylic and active intellects, *qua* unitary for the entire human race, would require insofar as they are abstract that any thought whatever would be the thinking of a mind that belongs to no individual, for such forms would necessarily be objective to all and belong to the realm of the intelligences of the spheres.

If one take, however, the more naive view of eternity as the sum total of individual existences throughout infinite time insofar as the human race is eternal, both active and hylic intellect, as well as the *intellectus speculativus* must be regarded as generable and corruptible insofar as in such a mode they are to be regarded as purely individual. In such a mode certainly there could be no conjunction whatever.

The problems which rise against the solutions which Averroes has proposed are as overwhelming as they are numerous. We may be certain from the texts which time has left us that Averroes was himself conscious of some of his difficulties. The variations in his theories as well must stand as witnesses of the fact. Firmly convinced of the possibility of conjunction, not only because of a religious conviction, but apparently through what he regarded as a personal proof of its possibility, Averroes has attempted a rationalistic demonstration of its possibility. His disregard of logical law, and reckless violation of his principles are as conspicuous as his proof is futile.

III

Aristotle and Averroes

Averroes' intentions in his literary and intellectual labors seem to have been directed toward a two-fold end. The one was obviously the interpretation of Aristotle; the other, the explanation of the possibility of the ultimate conjunction of the hylic with the active intellect. The latter of these problems was, as we have stated in the previous chapter, a problem which was of a particular theological interest as well as of metaphysical interest. With it theologians began their study of religion; with it philosophers ended their speculations.[1] While Averroes seems to have found the justification for his efforts at its solution in Aristotle, the number of independent treatises on the subject would seem to indicate that his interest in the problem had a wider appeal for him than the mere solution of a problem which Aristotle had left unsolved. At the very least, the problem had become one which proved of overmastering interest. Of the nature of the problem of conjunction and Averroes' proofs we have already treated; of the more precise relation of Averroes to Aristotle and an estimate of the success with which Averroes met in his interpretation of Aristotle's theory of the intellects it shall be our primary purpose to treat in the present chapter.

Although Aristotle clearly distinguishes between sensation and imagination on the one hand, and imagination and thought on the other,[2] Averroes has persisted in speaking of the faculty of imagination as being in itself an intellect. In fact, it is the faculty of imagination which Averroes believes to be the passive intellect of which Aristotle speaks.[3]

In Averroes' treatment of the nature of imagination in general one finds no variation from that of Aristotle. In this respect the commentator has followed his master to the slightest detail,

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[1] Steinschneider—*Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters*, p. 27.
[2] *De Anima*, 427 b, 14, 15.
[3] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 5, p. 151B, *et alia.*

and his commentation is merely an elaboration of the Aristotelian text without the addition of anything which is foreign to the original text or its meaning. His motive for regarding the faculty of imagination as the passive intellect may be found in his attempts to solve the difficulties arising from the uncertain treatment by Aristotle of the nature of the passive and the active intellect. For the solution of these difficulties Averroes' logic and compromising attitude were inadequate. The result of his efforts was merely to suggest difficulties which were equally as great as those with which he set out.

The real opinion of Aristotle concerning the nature of the passive, as well as of the active intellect, it is difficult to determine for the various passages which one finds scattered here and there among his works seem contradictory in nature. Among the commentators likewise, one can find little agreement in their interpretation concerning the nature of these intellects. The passive intellect is described by Trendelenberg as the sum of all the lower faculties insofar as they are necessary in thinking.[4] Such an interpretation of the nature of the passive intellect seems contrary to the statement of Aristotle that thought is distinct from both perception and imagination.[5] If one add that it is the forms in the images which the intellect thinks,[6] it is necessary to agree with Averroes that such forms are universals[7] insofar as they represent abstractions. Despite the fact that perception and imagination are distinct, their distinction, according to Aristotle, seems to be primarily a distinction of function rather than a distinction as to the nature of the forms concerned. It is difficult to understand in what mode it would be possible for the perceptive and imaginative faculties, jointly or separately, to attain to the level of abstract thought, as Trendelenberg would apparently maintain to be possible. Such a view would obviously violate, as well, the rank which is given intellect over and above the other forms of soul according to Aristotle's fondness for hierarchical classification. To him, as

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[4] *De Anima*, p. 405.
[5] *De Anima*, 427 b, 14, 15.
[6] *De Anima*, 431 b, 1.
[7] *De Anima*, Bk. II, com. 63, p. 82D; com. 65, p. 83E, *et alia*.

well as to Brentano, who regards the passive intellect as imagination as the seat of the thought images,[8] one need only reply with the objection of Zeller,[9] that sensation and imagination are common to the lower animals as well, while intellect is the faculty by virtue of which man becomes superior to all the lower species.

To such an interpretation of the hylic intellect Averroes would by no means assent. Although Averroes denominates the *virtus imaginativa* as the passive or passible intellect it is only by a transference of terms that he does so in order to escape a contradiction since he speaks of the hylic intellect as impassive although it belongs to the genus of passive faculties.[10] The only mode in which the term passivity is applicable to the hylic intellect is that according to which it is receptive of the forms. Averroes was apparently cognizant of the difficulties which presented themselves in Aristotle's theory, and of the impossibility of satisfactorily reconciling the various, scattered statements of his master, but under no conditions would he regard the hylic intellect as a merely individual faculty such as sense is. Its conception which is purely of universals required that it be by no means body or a faculty in the body, and in such a mode it could be regarded as truly a capacity peculiar to man alone.

More consistent with the statements of Aristotle concerning the nature of the hylic intellect, and apparently more satisfactory, is the view of Ravaisson,[11] who regards the hylic intellect as "the universal potentiality in the world of ideas." Somewhat similar to this is the interpretation of Zeller, and that of Hicks. According to Zeller,[12] "the hylic intellect is to be regarded as the

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[8] *Psychologie*, p. 208. Hammond, p. LXXXIII, seems to incline toward a view somewhat analogous to that of Trendelenburg and Brentano insofar as he seems to refer to the hylic intellect as a sort of potentiality existing in the product of sense—perception as re-wrought in memory and phantasy. This theory, while agreeing with the analogy as expressed in Bk. III, Chap. V, (430 a, 10–17) obviously does not regard the passive intellect as a real capacity as is required to meet the conditions expressed in Bk. III, Chap. IV, (429 a, 22).

[9] *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, Pt. II, Vol. 2, p. 576.

[10] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 4, p. 137E; *et alia*.

[11] Ravaisson, *Essai sur la Metaphysique d'Aristote*, I, pp. 586 ff; II, pp. 17, 19.

[12] Zeller, *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, Pt. II, Vol. 2, p. 575.

sum of those faculties of representation which go beyond imagination and sensible perception, and yet fall short of that higher thought which has found peace in perfect unity with its object." Hicks[13] seems to regard the intellects as constituting a unit, in fact, the hylic or potential intellect is merely the intellect in a state of inactivity, while the active intellect represents the intellect as an actually functioning or thinking intellect. Somewhat similar to Hicks' view is that of Wallace who regards both intellects as mere aspects of one and the same intellect,[14] the passive intellect being merely the intellect "applying itself in the various processes which fill our minds with the materials of knowledge."[15]

Ravaisson's view of the passive intellect as the universal potentiality in the world of ideas analogous to prime matter in the world of Reality corresponds closely enough to the analogy of matter and form which Aristotle has used to express the relation between the two intellects,[16] and would undoubtedly satisfy the condition that the hylic intellect is nothing at all actually before it thinks.[17] However, the definition may be criticized on the ground that it is too general, since it apparently leaves no room for the more purely individualistic aspect of the intellect. Despite the assertion of Averroes that the hylic intellect may be regarded as eternal, he too, nevertheless regards it as in another mode a purely individual possession and capacity. While the views of Hicks and Wallace possess a certain degree of plausibility, they fail to take into account the immortality of the active intellect, a doctrine which is accepted by Averroes despite the fact that he has by no means developed a satisfactory proof of such a possibility. The theory of Zeller while satisfactory insofar as it regards the hylic intellect as a faculty superior to both sense and imagination seems to violate the apparent simplicity of nature which Aristotle has attributed to this capacity.

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[13] Hicks, *De Anima*, p. LXVIII.
[14] Wallace, *Aristotle's Psychology*, p. CXV.
[15] *Ibid*, p. XCVIII.
[16] *De Anima*, Bk. III, Chap. 5, 430 a, 10–15.
[17] *De Anima*, Bk. III, Chap. 4, 429 a, 22–24.

None of the interpretations of the nature of the hylic intellect which we have examined seem to fit completely all of the statements which Aristotle has left us. In fact Aristotle himself entertains two views as to its nature which seem incompatible. The one of these regards the hylic intellect as a mere capacity,[18] the place of forms; the other regards it as a faculty which is capable of development from an original state of pure potentiality to a state which ultimately permits it to think itself.[19] According to the former view the passive or hylic intellect is in constant need of the active intellect; according to the latter view the active intellect would ultimately become a mere superfluity.

The hylic intellect, which is the part of the soul with which it thinks, is, as we have already noticed in the theory of the commentator, a mere capacity, and must necessarily be impassive but receptive of the forms which it receives, and potentially like those forms although not identical with them. The presence of some form would serve as a hindrance to the reception of alien forms, and as in the case of sense, if mixed with matter, would possess a specificity of function. Its impassivity Aristotle would apparently ascribe to its separability.

On the other hand, according to another exposition, Aristotle describes the relation of the active intellect by the analogy of form to matter.[20] The hylic intellect becomes all forms through the agency of the active intellect. However, in this case it is the active intellect to which are assigned the attributes of separability, impassivity, and freedom from mixture, insofar as it is essentially an activity. The inference obviously suggested is the contradictory of the previous exposition concerning the nature of the passive intellect.

Aristotle's theory of a gradual actualization of the hylic intellect from the stage of pure potentiality to a capacity which is capable of self-intuition while not necessarily militant against the preceding expositions in all respects, is certainly irreconcilable

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[18] *De Anima*, Bk. III, Chap. 4, 429 a, 15–429 b, 5.
[19] *De Anima*, Bk. III, Chap. 4, 429 b, 5–9.
[20] *De Anima*, Bk. III, Chap. 5, 430 a, 10–14.

in some respects. A gradual actualization through education, such as Aristotle apparently has here in mind does involve a qualitative change, and such change involves passivity in the strictest sense of the term. According to one exposition, however, we have seen Aristotle describe the hylic intellect as impassive. True passivity involves a qualitative change,[21] whereas the passivity as applied to the hylic intellect in its reception of the form involves no change of such a nature whatever.

The difficulties which Aristotle has raised are insurmountable. Zeller[22] maintains the active intellect alone is separate from the body. On the other side one may find Sainte-Hilaire[23] and Rodier[24] arguing the logical separability of the passive intellect. The evidence seems no stronger for one side than the other.

Our exposition of the views of Averroes concerning the nature of the hylic intellect has shown that the commentator inclines toward the side of separability, although he has apparently been able to formulate no definite opinion upon the subject. At one moment he argues the total separability, eternity and unity of the hylic intellect; at another his view shifts to that of a partial separability only insofar as the hylic intellect is in the soul but distinct from the body itself. While it is true that Aristotle at one time assigns the attributes of separability, impassivity and freedom from mixture to the hylic intellect, it is doubtful that Aristotle would have implied the total separability of this intellect rather than its logical separability only. Averroes' implication, however, at one time, that the hylic intellect is totally separable, and consequently like the intelligences of the spheres, an individual, is primarily a result of his logic and an effort to mediate between the theories of Themistius and Theophrastus on the one hand that the hylic intellect is neither generable nor corruptible,—and hence eternal,—and of Alexander on the other hand, that the hylic intellect is a generated capacity. As a consequence Averroes finds himself

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[21] Cf. *De Anima*, Bk. II, Chap. 5, 417 b, 1–16.
[22] *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, Pt. II, Vol. II, p. 571.
[23] Sainte-Hilaire, *Psychologie d'Aristote*, Bk. III, Chap. IV, Sec. 1. Note, p. 290.
[24] Rodier, *Traité de lâme*, p. 461.

on the horns of a hopeless dilemma from which he vainly attempts to escape through a vain reconciliation of incompatible, in fact contradictory, attributes.

Blinded by his admiration for Aristotle, and always zealous in his efforts to adequately explain the meaning of his master, Averroes fails, as Aristotle apparently does also, to recognize the necessary contradiction between the theory which regards the hylic intellect as a mere potentiality and the place of forms and the theory which regards it as a capacity which is capable of development and actualization. Of the difficulty we have already spoken in the first chapter of our treatise. It is the latter theory which Averroes employs in the development of his theory of the *intellectus speculativus*, although he has regarded the latter intellect as distinct from the hylic intellect. One can form no other conclusion than that Averroes has here deliberately attempted to reconcile in some mode or other, and to identify if possible, the intellect in its speculative capacity with the intellects of which Aristotle makes mention in his treatise on the soul.

Equally unsatisfactory is Aristotle's treatment of the active intellect. What is its source? Aristotle gives us no clue to the solution of the difficulty. As Zeller rightly remarks,[25] it must enter the individual from the outer world. Is it the divine intellect itself? Aristotle gives us no answer to the question. It is evident that the God of whom Aristotle speaks is not of such a nature as to be an indwelling God who could become human reason at the same time, although such seems to be the explanation of Alexander who identifies the active intellect with God. Averroes' treatment likewise gives us no adequate answer to the problem. At one time the active intellect is interpreted as constituting an activity within the soul; at another, Averroes regards it as totally abstract and constituting an objective intelligence after the fashion of the intelligences of the spheres. His treatment suggests the same vacillating uncertainty concerning it as we found to be the case with his speculations concerning the hylic intellect.

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[25] Zeller *Die Philosophie der Griechen*, Pt. II, Vol. 2, p. 574.

Aristotle's conception of the function and nature of the active intellect, as Dr. Newbold remarks, varies as well as his conception of the hylic intellect. From one point of view the active intellect is the cause which brings all concepts into being, and is their common form which differentiates them from all else. In a sense the active intellect is no consciousness at all. What seems to be a somewhat different theory is his conception of the active intellect as a heavenly ray, which has been compared by the same authority with the focus of consciousness. A third variation regards the active intellect as the unifying function of the mind while in the *Parva Naturalia*[26] the active intellect tends to be merged with the common sense into a function which is operative in all fields of consciousness.

Averroes follows quite closely the Aristotelian conceptions concerning the nature of the active intellect although in a number of instances, as we have already explained, one may find variations as to detail. According to one mode the mediation of the active intellect is indirect insofar as it is the intelligibles alone which actualize the hylic intellect. Another view regards the active intellect as exercising a more direct function upon the hylic intellect, somewhat after the analogy of art to its matter. It is at the same time expressed by the relation of light to sight. In none of the available treatises does Averroes regard the active intellect as merged with the common sense and together with it exercises a function which is operative in all fields of consciousness. However, the unifying function, as it is exercised in the conjunction or disjunction of concepts, which Aristotle has attributed to the active intellect, is attributed by Averroes to the hylic intellect insofar as it is an actualized intellect and capable of independent thought.[27]

A final word remains to be said concerning the efforts of Averroes, and an estimate to be made of his importance in the history of thinking.

In the main, Averroes has been content to be a mere commentator of the works of Aristotle. When one considers that

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[26] *Parva naturalia*, 461 b, 25.
[27] *De Anima*, Bk. III, com. 21, p. 166C.

his texts had passed from the Greek to the Syriac, and then into the Arabic, in which language he became familiar with them, one may perhaps be amazed at the accuracy with which he seems to have been able to interpret the ideas of Aristotle. It is primarily in the problems which have been raised by Aristotle and not given any solution by him that one must look for original contributions if there be any.

Averroes' doctrine concerning the active and passive intellect is, as we have seen, essentially like that of Aristotle. Averroes' assertion that the hylic intellect is necessarily an existent is merely an assertion which Aristotle himself has implied, although as both insist, it is no substance. The very contradiction of doctrine as to the nature of the hylic intellect is common to both. The identification of the Aristotelian speculative intellect with the hylic intellect as an actualized faculty capable of independent thought represents a mere attempt at a reconciliation of elements which Aristotle apparently had never attempted to reconcile or even to develop to any great degree. The intellect which Averroes regards as the truly passive intellect is the faculty of imagination, and yet to it, Averroes assigns nothing which is new. The attribute of passivity is merely a transfer of a term which he considered inappropriate to the hylic intellect to the lower faculty without any innovation whatever.

Even in his solutions of the problems concerning the hylic intellect he has merely attempted to reconcile the contradictory remarks which Aristotle has made. The problem of its separability is one in which Averroes himself had apparently never been able to come to a solution. In fact one might readily state, as we have already attempted to explain, Averroes' solutions have been based upon an attempted reconciliation of irreconcilable attributes. The hylic intellect is one for the entire human race; on the other hand it is also the individual possession of each man. It is eternal but also generable and corruptible. The same may be said of the active and speculative intellects. His conception of the eternity of hylic intellect although *apparently* novel was nevertheless held by Themistius, while Alexander, as we have already stated, identifies the active intellect with God. In either case the assertion of the unity of either is a

mere necessary conclusion of the Aristotelian principles. In all of his major discussions Averroes has merely taken the opposing view of Alexander and Themistius, primarily, and attempted a reconciliation between them. The result has been in most instances an impossible conclusion. A very doubtful contribution may be found in the theory of a second function which is attributed to the active intellect in Averroes' treatise on the possibility of conjunction, although as we explained, Averroes has apparently introduced it as a *deus ex machina* to explain his extremely naive view of conjunction. One other development which may apparently be credited to Averroes is his introduction of the *virtus cogitativa* as an active intermediary function between imagination and memory. A third doubtful variation which dare hardly be called a contribution, insofar as it is contradictory to one interpretation of the hylic intellect as generable and corruptible, is his assertion that human immortality is impossible since the passible intellect, which consists at one time of the *virtus imaginativa* and the *virtus cogitativa*, at another of the former only, is generable and corruptible while the active intellect is separable as well as the hylic intellect.

In the face of such evidence it is impossible to maintain that the commentator has been much more than a commentator or that he has contributed to the history of thought anything which is of definite value.

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